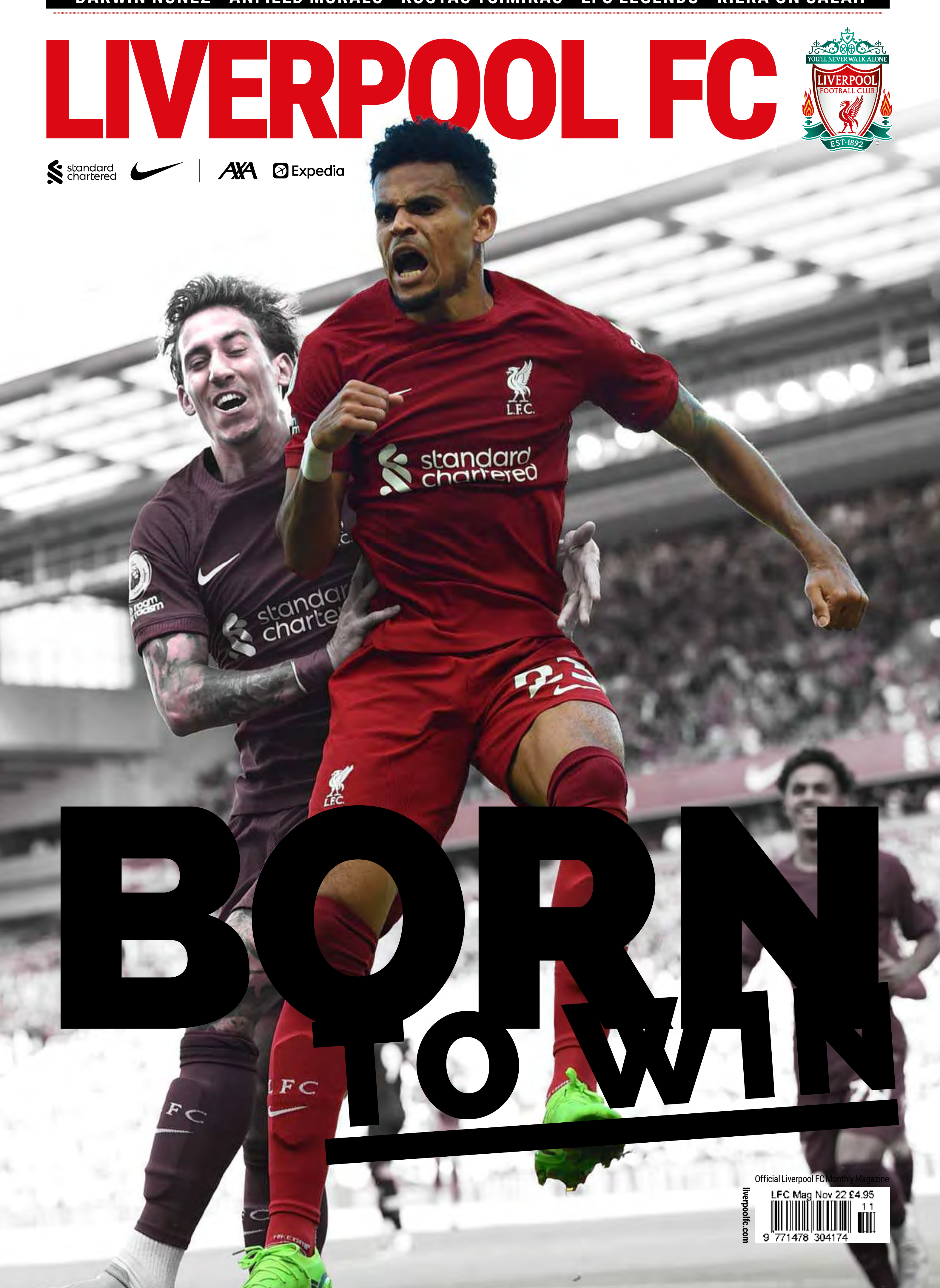
DARWIN NUNEZ • ANFIELD MURALS • KOSTAS TSIMIKAS • LFC LEGENDS • RIERA ON SALAH

LIVERPOOL FC



BORN TO WIN

Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine
LFC Mag Nov 22 £4.95
11
9 771478 304174
liverpoolfc.com

CONTENTS

Reach Sport
Editor David Cottrell
Assistant Editor William Hughes
Writer Chris McLoughlin
Production Editor
Michael McGuinness
Design Colin Sumpter, Lee Ashun
Contributors Dave Ball, Ged Rea
Photography Getty Images, Alamy, Mirrorpix, Liverpool Echo, John Powell, Andrew Powell, Nicholas Taylor
© Liverpool Football Club & Athletic Grounds Ltd.
Published by Reach Sport Managing Director Steve Hanrahan
Commercial Director Will Beedles Executive Art Editor Rick Cooke Executive Editor Paul Dove
Marketing & Communications Manager Claire Brown
Printed by William Gibbons
Email liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com
To subscribe visit www.reachsportshop.com





TRENT ON TARGET

In years to come this will definitely be on the compilation of Trent Alexander-Arnold's greatest goals, under the subsection for free-kicks. Seven minutes had elapsed against Rangers in the Champions League group game at Anfield when the right-back stepped up to deliver an unstoppable drive into the top-left corner from 25 yards to send the Reds on their way to three more precious points. Afterwards he told BT Sport: "I don't normally score them from that side, I usually score them from the other side of the pitch! For me it was just about getting it on target. It's what I was focusing on and what I was practising – hitting the target. There's always a chance of it going in with rebounds and stuff like that."


M.SALAH
11


BORN IN THE 90'S.
The New Nike Flight Ball.
NIKE
OFFICIAL MATCH BALL OF THE PREMIER LEAGUE
2022 - 2023
Premier League
Premier League



CORNER TAKEN QUICKLY



Just like Barcelona in 2019, the page where you don't know what to expect…

LFC Halloween XI

(we're by far the greatest scream…)

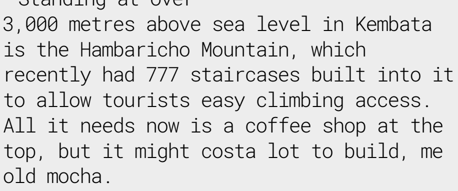
FRANKENSTEIN Lane
Jason McAtEERIE
Martin SCAREtel
Mark FRIGHT
Joel BATip
Steve DARKNESS
SteFANG Bajcetic
Steven WARLOCK
Harvey SPELLiott
Sean DunDEEMON
Florent Sinama-PonGHOUL
Sub: PHANTOMmy Smith

KING KENNY TOOK THE LFC V MUFC LEGENDS GAME SERIOUSLY THEN…

"Show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser."

OUR LADS HAVE COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE

Melkamu Frauendorf (Kembata, Ethiopia)



Kembata Tembaro, to give its full name, is a zone in the SNNPR regional state in southwestern Ethiopia. Located about 600km away from the Kenyan border, it is named after the Kembata people. Which makes you wonder why we don't all support Scousepool.

The two main woredas (districts) in Kembata are Durame and Shinshicko with the zone having a population of just over 1,000,000, although Reds forward Melkamu Fraundorf hasn't lived there since 2008 when he and brother Melesse moved to Schefflenz, Baden-Würtemberg. Which, as you may have guessed, is in Germany rather than Ethiopia.

Much of Kembata is rural and the area is known for growing quality coffee beans in fertile soil over 2,000 metres above sea level. It means Kembata coffee is a lot like Anfield – the best ground in the country – although we should leave the coffee jokes there before we cause a right brewhaha.

Standing at over 3,000 metres above sea level in Kembata is the Hambaricho Mountain, which recently had 777 staircases built into it to allow tourists easy climbing access. All it needs now is a coffee shop at the top, but it might costa lot to build, me old mocha.

BLAGGING IT

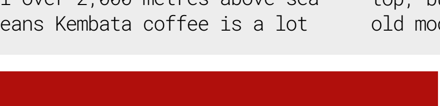
One of these facts about Arthur Melo is true, the others are false. Is it a case of You'll Never squawk alone? Or will you stick with the flock? Take a guess…

- *Arthur looked after exotic birds at the family home in Brazil as a child.*
- *Arthur looked after his school's stick insects in Brazil as a child.*
- *Arthur looked after ponies and sheep on a farm in Brazil as a child.*

Answer: If you thought LFC's Brazilian midfielder looked after insects give yourself some stick. He wasn't tweet on parrots either, but did look after ponies and sheep on his parents' farm when growing up in Goiana, Brazil.

RANDOM CHANT OF THE MONTH

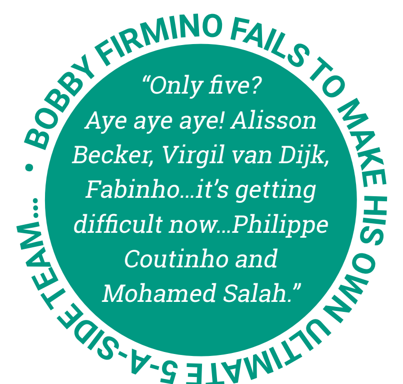
He's big,
He's red,
His feet stick out the bed,
Peter Crouch, Peter Crouch



SCORED ON THEIR BIRTHDAY

Age	Player	Year
20	Steve McManaman	1992
21	Ronnie Whelan	1982
23	Andy Carroll	2012
24	Daniel Sturridge	2013
25	Stevie Heighway	1972
26	Billy Liddell	1948
27	Takumi Minamino	2022
28	Terry McDermott	1979
30	Terry McDermott	1981
31	Robbie Fowler	2006
34	Phil Neal	1985






Expedia

"I want **GOALS** and **ASSISTS**"

It's been a whirlwind 2022 since he signed but
Luis Diaz has no intention of easing up – he'll give absolutely
everything to bring this Reds team more success

LUIS, FIVE YEARS AGO YOU WERE JUST STARTING OUT AT ATLETICO JUNIORS IN COLOMBIA, NOW YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PLAYER FOR LIVERPOOL – HOW MUCH HAS THAT LUCHO OF 2017 CHANGED?

I don't think I've changed very much as a person in those five years. Maybe more than anything it's in my daily lifestyle in that there are now more things like these interviews and maybe experiencing things on a bigger scale in a sporting sense too.

But on a personal front I've always tried not to change at all, and to keep my feet on the ground and still be that humble, laid-back player if you like, to sum up in a few words.

Coming from Colombian football to play here in the English game has been a very big change for me, for reasons we all know. It's been incredible for me when I realise just how much I have grown as a player, and just how far I've come to be at such a big and iconic club as Liverpool, and so personally that is something I can be proud of myself about.

Looking back, I can say I've achieved a fair amount and quite a bit more than other people might have thought possible. So it's been amazing and I am living the dream now as a footballer with everything that I'm experiencing.

Let's hope that it continues like this and that I keep up the same levels of hard work, concentration and sacrifice so that I go on to achieve a lot more, which is what I would like to do.

YOUR FIRST NINE MONTHS AT LIVERPOOL HAS BEEN A REVELATION TO PLAYERS, FANS AND PUNDITS ALIKE. WHAT HAS BEEN KEY TO ADAPTING SO QUICKLY?

I think it was having that real hunger and desire for wanting to keep making progress as a player when you come to such a big club where you get to live out your dream, the thing you've always wanted to do. That was one of the keys to it. Because I've always tried to play each game as if it were a cup final and I've tried to enjoy myself at every single moment since I arrived.

And you cannot say enough about just how important all my team-mates have been for me, who have helped me greatly, right from those early moments when I'd just arrived, up to the present day, where they are still helping me loads. It's so important. They made me feel like a member of the family, of the team, from day one. So that was a big thing for me.

So, from then on, I started to grow in confidence a lot more as things were going well for me on the field as each game went by too. It was just incredible, and I hope it can continue like this, and I can keep contributing to the team effort, which is what I want the most.

WHICH TEAM-MATES HAVE HELPED YOU THE MOST?

I'd say the likes of Bobby Firmino, Fabinho, Alisson, Thiago Alcantara, Adrian, they were the ones who got closer to me early on. The leaders in the team too, Milner for example, and Henderson, they all approached me using Thiago as a translator… So that was all vital in my settling-in process.

It was so important that they made me feel a real part of things, and so I settled in really well as a result. I'm very happy and content to be right here where I am today, and I will always try and give my very best in every game in order to win.







"IT'S BEEN INCREDIBLE FOR ME WHEN I REALISE JUST HOW MUCH I HAVE GROWN AS A PLAYER, AND JUST HOW FAR I'VE COME TO BE AT SUCH A BIG AND ICONIC CLUB AS LIVERPOOL, AND SO PERSONALLY THAT IS SOMETHING I CAN BE PROUD OF MYSELF ABOUT"



standard chartered
L.F.C.
Ziggo
FOUNDATION
23

JÜRGEN KLOPP APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOMETHING OF A FATHER FIGURE TO YOU. HOW DID HE ACCEPT YOU AND WHAT DOES HE DEMAND?

Jürgen has been brilliant with me right from the beginning. That first day he gave me a big hug and the warmest welcome you could imagine. I immediately felt a special connection with him, and had the feeling that things were going to go really well. So it's been vitally important for me, knowing that I had his backing right from the start.

Every day in training I observe him and can see that he is an incredible coach and has so many great attributes that are of benefit to every one of our players and my team-mates.

The big thing he always emphasises to me is that I continue to play the same way as I have at my previous clubs, and that I'd shown him what I could do and so it was just more of the same, no need for anything different, that I was already a great player who always gives of his best.

Here at Liverpool their DNA has always been about the right attitude, of wanting it more and always fighting hard in every single game. Playing to the limit and treating every game as if it were a cup final.

On the tactical front I've also learned a few more things. I also learned a lot in that respect during my time with Porto and so that also made things a lot easier.

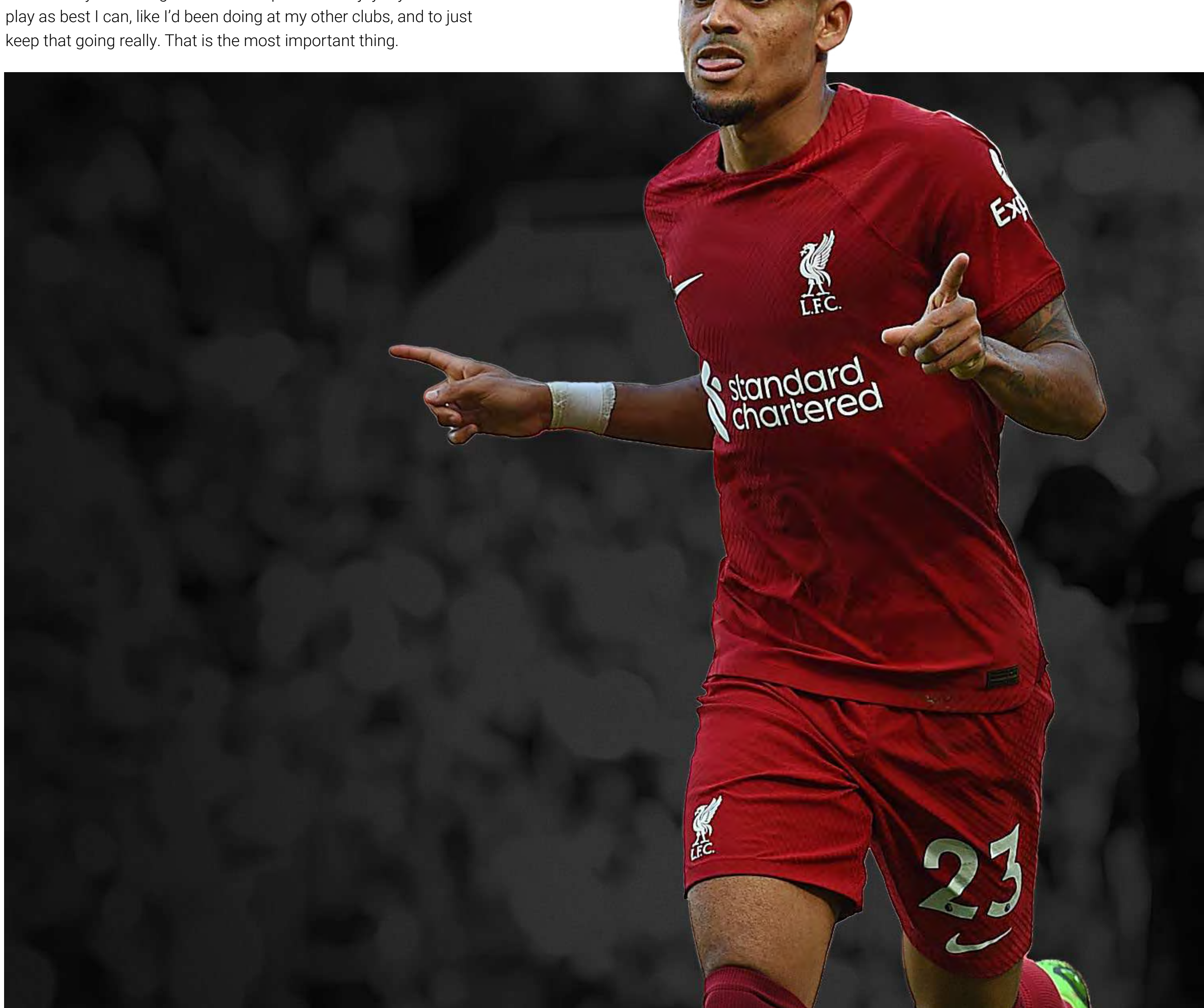
I've always tried to go out onto the pitch and enjoy myself and to play as best I can, like I'd been doing at my other clubs, and to just keep that going really. That is the most important thing.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS THAT THE PREMIER LEAGUE HAS THAT OTHER LEAGUES DON'T?

The beauty of the Premier League is found in the games themselves. Every game is incredible in its own right. Every opposition team you come up against you know will make things difficult for you, and that you're in for a tough game from the first minute to the ninetieth.

They can hurt you at any second, just like you can them, so that's the attraction it has, knowing that you have to be motivated and really at it 100 per cent in every single game. Everyone tries to give everything and goes full-out. You can see that any team can beat any other team at any moment.

And there's also the support that each club gets from their fans. I can see over here that the supporters fill every stadium you go to play in. These are the kind of things that the English league has that you don't see everywhere else. There are other things apart from these things too, but they all help make it a very special league to play in.



WHAT TARGETS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF AND THE TEAM THIS SEASON?

As a group the aim is to always try and win every game and every competition that we play in, for me that would be great. And personally for me it's the same target: to always try and help the team to achieve big things.

I'd like to score plenty of goals too and make a lot of assists also. I want to always be available to help the team to always be winners and champions as that is what we all want the most.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BALLON D'OR – DID YOU EVER IMAGINE BEING IN THE TOP 30 NOMINEES?

No, it's just incredible. My reaction when the list came out, well, I felt very proud and satisfied, just seeing my name there. In times gone by I'd always dreamt about that and it was something I'd always wanted, to be up there among the best players. So seeing that list when it appeared was an incredibly satisfying moment for me. My family were also really happy and excited at the news too.

But now, it's all about trying to carry on as normal and trying to keep my feet on the ground and remain focused and working as hard as ever to achieve many more things that I know that I'm capable of achieving. But I'm very happy and content with everything that I'm living and experiencing at the moment, and long may it continue.



"AS A GROUP THE AIM IS TO ALWAYS TRY AND WIN EVERY GAME AND EVERY COMPETITION THAT WE PLAY IN, FOR ME THAT WOULD BE GREAT. AND PERSONALLY FOR ME IT'S THE SAME TARGET: TO ALWAYS TRY AND HELP THE TEAM TO ACHIEVE BIG THINGS"



"FOR SURE THE DREAM IS ALWAYS THERE, YOU ALWAYS ASPIRE AND DREAM OF ACHIEVING GREAT THINGS, BUT YOU'D NEVER HAVE THOUGHT THAT EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE HAPPENED SO QUICKLY AS IT HAS"







WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD PLAYING FOOTBALL IN COLOMBIA, COULD YOU EVER HAVE IMAGINED THIS? WAS IT JUST A DREAM?

For sure the dream is always there, you always aspire and dream of achieving great things, but you'd never have thought that everything would have happened so quickly as it has and that right now, I'd be among the nominations for the Ballon d'Or.

I guess they are the things that you try and let yourself dream about, saying to yourself now and again, let's hope that one day I make it to that level. But you never imagine that it would come about so quickly. It's a really big morale-booster for every player when stuff like this happens to them and so you have to ensure you remain extremely focused and concentrated as well as aware of what is happening.

But you also have to enjoy the moment as well. I believe that's important too. You don't always get moments like this to enjoy. I'm very proud of what I have achieved and very happy too, like I was saying, about what I've accomplished so far.

I will keep working hard and keep performing well and doing the right things so that I can continue to achieve many more things that are within my reach.

NEXT MONTH THE PREMIER LEAGUE STOPS WHILE THE WORLD CUP TAKES PLACE IN QATAR – IT MUST HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING TO SEE COLOMBIA MISS OUT ON QUALIFICATION?

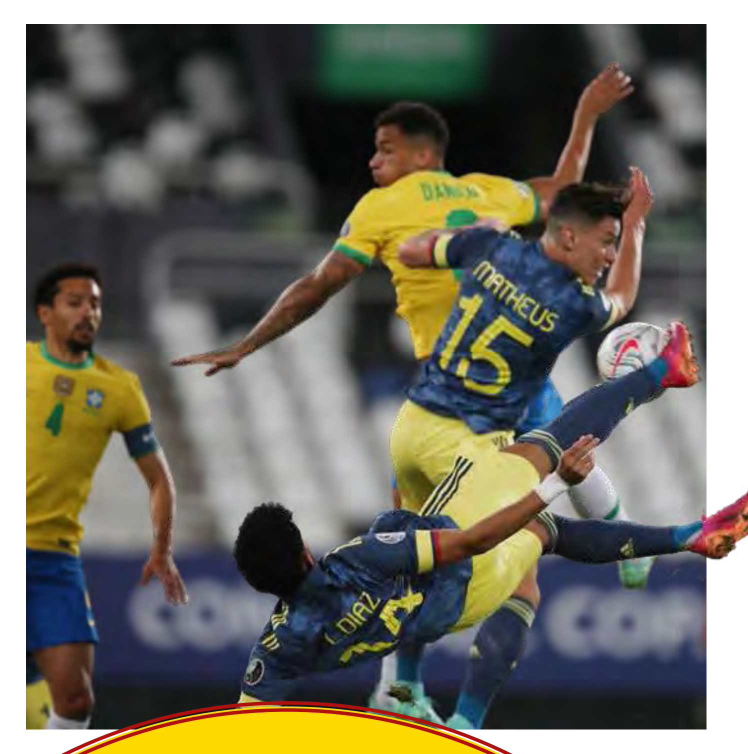
Yes, it is a real pity we're not going to be there, but the new faces coming in now can hopefully put right what we weren't able to achieve in the last qualifiers to ensure we get through next time, especially given the management and coaching team we have.

We have a squad of great players, good enough to get to a World Cup in my opinion, so we will try to always do our best, just as we've always done, and to stick together right now, to start off once again in great form as the new players and the coaching staff really get to know each other and build a big family spirit once again in the national team.




L.F.C.
standard chartered

"I SCORED AGAINST BRAZIL WITH AN OVERHEAD KICK AND ALISSON JOKED, 'IT'S A GOOD JOB IT WASN'T AGAINST ME!' BUT EVERYONE SAID IT WAS A GREAT GOAL"



IN THE DRESSING-ROOM HAS ANYONE MENTIONED THE OVERHEAD KICK YOU SCORED AGAINST BRAZIL AT THE 2021 COPA AMERICA?

[Laughing] Yes! It was a time when we were in a hotel the night before a game and the subject came up of the national team playing in the Copa America. They reminded me of it first by saying 'Wow, what a goal that was you scored!' Alisson was joking, saying, 'It was a good job it wasn't against me!' But they all just said it was a great goal and took the opportunity to congratulate me on it. It was a lovely moment.

WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF 'EL PIBE' ['THE KID'] CARLOS VALDERRAMA WHO STARTED EVERYTHING BY TAKING YOU TO THAT TOURNAMENT AND WHO'S WELL-KNOWN IN ENGLAND AS A PLAYER?

I always have really great memories of El Pibe because he was first of all an absolute legend for us Colombians. I remember always watching him on TV and he was a total idol for us.

The day he picked the squad to go off for that Copa America was amazing. He soon was able to spot the qualities I had as a player, and he also tried to make me realise exactly what ability I had as a player. We spent time together and we shared a massive hug as we greeted each other. It was incredible for me to spend those moments with him.

To this day I have huge respect for him. He is still a legend for us all and I just admire him loads.



BALLON D'OR REDS

Luis is one of six Reds shortlisted for the 2022 Ballon d'Or award. He is joined in the final 30 by Trent Alexander-Arnold, Virgil van Dijk, Fabinho, Darwin Nunez and Mo Salah. Alisson Becker is on the shortlist for the Yashin Trophy award for goalkeepers. The prize will be handed out at a ceremony at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris on 17 October.

The full shortlist is: Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool), Karim Benzema (Real Madrid), Joao Cancelo (Manchester City), Casemiro (Manchester United), Thibaut Courtois (Real Madrid), Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United), Kevin De Bruyne (Manchester City), Luis Diaz (Liverpool), Fabinho (Liverpool), Phil Foden (Manchester City), Erling Haaland (Manchester City), Sebastien Haller (Borussia Dortmund), Harry Kane (Tottenham Hotspur), Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Rafael Leao (AC Milan), Robert Lewandowski (Barcelona) Riyad Mahrez (Manchester City), Mike Maignan (AC Milan), Sadio Mane (Bayern Munich), Kylian Mbappe (PSG), Luka Modric (Real Madrid), Christopher Nkunku (RB Leipzig), Darwin Nunez (Liverpool), Antonio Rudiger (Real Madrid), Mohamed Salah (Liverpool), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City), Son Heung-min (Tottenham), Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool), Vinicius Junior (Real Madrid), Dusan Vlahovic (Juventus).


AXA
LFC
4
32
6
AXA
Know Your


AXA TRAINING CENTRE
AXA
AXA
LFC


Here to support you too
From Car, Home and Business Insurance, to Health and Wellbeing. You can be confident we're behind you every step of the way, just as we are with Liverpool FC.
Visit axa.co.uk to see how we can help you.
Know You Can
AXA
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
EST 1892
Official Training Partner



Autumn, Kirkby, sunshine...and a silly hat for Thiago, obviously

"Can Kostas just borrow this a second..."

"Fits like a dream..."

Carvalho practising his midfield meerkat moves



Opinion was still divided on the effectness of the new Strictly Come Dancing drill

The hunt was on for the longest blade of grass...or was it Milner's last Yorkshire tea bag?





"I'd join in, lads, but I'm pretending to be a werewolf...grrr!"



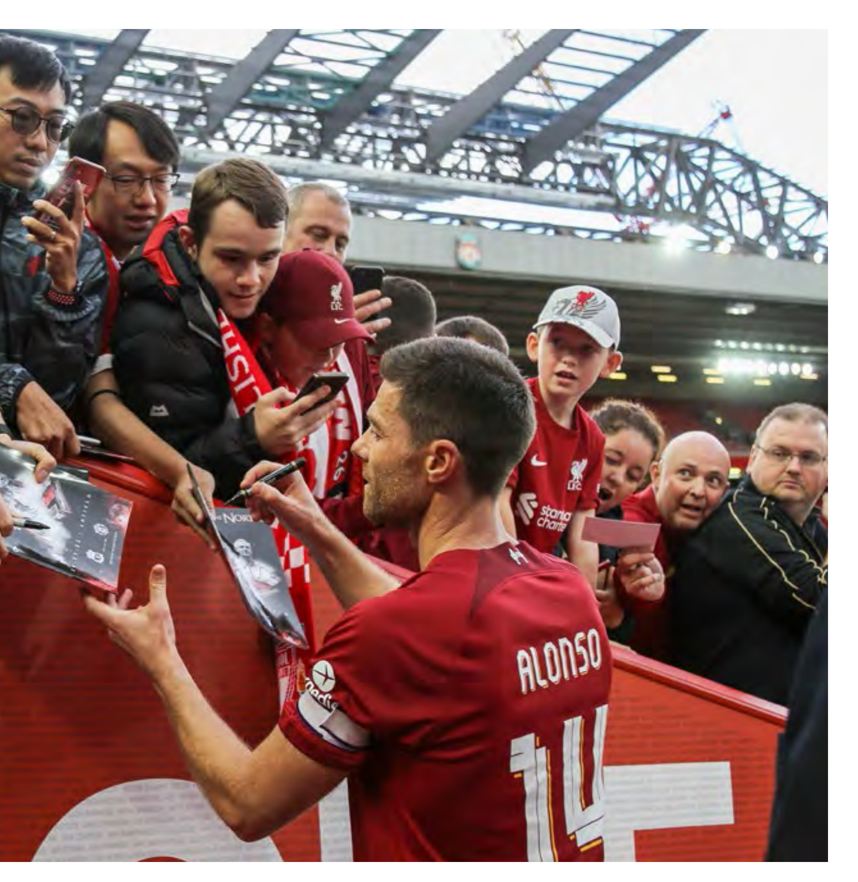
Mo was clearly not impressed by Joel's mad bull impression

Although it doesn't take much for Bobby to give us one of those smiles


STILL

Captain
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST • 1892
LFC FOUNDATION
LEGENDS CHARITY MATCH
LIVERPOOL FC LEGENDS v
MANCHESTER UNITED LEGENDS
ANFIELD STADIUM
24 SEPTEMBER 2022

GOT IT...



Liverpool Legends and their Manchester United guests put on a super show at Anfield for some of the most deserving causes in the community and elsewhere

Words: Chris McLoughlin

"I loved it," said Xabi Alonso after captaining Liverpool FC Legends to a 2-1 victory against Manchester United Legends at Anfield. "You have pretty stadiums all over the world, great atmospheres, Champions League nights – but this is Anfield. The soul, the stands, the lights, it's different and it's pure football.

"That's why we love it as a player, as a fan, as anyone that comes. I really loved it and a great cause, great atmosphere, best stadium in the world. Great day."

The Spanish midfield maestro may now be 40, but he can still spray a ball around Anfield like the 23-year-old who arrived from Real Sociedad in 2004. One glorious first-half diagonal pass from the halfway line was met on the volley by Anthony Le Tallec in the penalty area and although he fired the shot wide, the Anfield crowd were purring at the sight of Alonso doing his thing again in Liverpool red.

"That doesn't change," he said of his passing range. "Many things change, the legs change, the strength changes. But





once you have that understanding after playing so many years, it is still there. As long as I can, I will love to come back."

It was the first time that Liverpool Legends and Manchester United Legends had met at Anfield, but was their second clash of 2022. The first leg of this Legends of the North double-header had been held at Old Trafford in May with Sir Kenny Dalglish's men running out 3-1 winners. Luis Garcia and a Mark Gonzalez double got the job done, but it was United's first-leg goalscorer Dimitar Berbatov who got on the scoresheet first at Anfield.

The Bulgarian striker almost signed for Liverpool in 2005 until the move was cancelled after the Reds drew Bayer Leverkusen, the club he played for, in the Champions League. Berbatov showed the Kop what we missed out on in the seventh minute when he brilliantly fired Danny Pugh's knockdown in the top corner, giving Jerzy Dudek no chance.

With Sir Kenny in charge again and Ian Rush and John Aldridge on coaching duties, the LFC Legends weren't short of advice from the bench and with Alonso pulling the strings in midfield they came increasingly close to equalising.

Momo Sissoko sent a diving header from Alonso's cross wide,

Maxi Rodriguez escaped the United defence but saw his low shot saved by Raimond van der Gouw and the visiting goalie also tipped Fabio Aurelio's free-kick over.

So United led at the break, but the half-time arrival of eight subs including Robbie Keane, Florent Sinama-Pongolle and Mark Gonzalez were game-changers. Two minutes after the interval Jaap Stam failed to cut out Flo's pass and Keane, on his Liverpool Legends debut, centred for Gonzalez to make it 1-1.

Keane – who it's fair to say received a better reception than namesake Roy who came on for his United Legends debut at the ground where he made his last first-team appearance for the Red Devils – then had a header saved by Van der Gouw before Aurelio nodded a Gonzalez cross wide.

At the other end Sander Westerveld saved from Ronny Johnsen, but the Kop wanted a winning goal and they got it in the 83rd minute. Albert Riera won a tackle and although Luis Garcia's pull-back to Keane was blocked by Johnsen, Sinama-Pongolle arrived to slot the ball home from 16 yards out.

It proved to be the clincher, although not before Fraizer Campbell had a late equaliser chalked off for a borderline offside.



"I'm very happy to score at the Kop end," said Sinama-Pongolle, who netted nine goals during his LFC career. "It is always special scoring for Liverpool – for the Reds. To be here again, bringing some kind of joy against Man United, rivals, I'm very happy.

"I feel part of the family, to be honest. It's everything new, but only the walls are new – the story and everything; the atmosphere, the smells, it's still the same. This is why it is still very special to have one foot inside the Liverpool family."

Another man who thoroughly enjoyed himself was Martin Skrtel. The 37-year-old Slovakian pulled on the number 37 shirt again to make his Liverpool Legends debut after retiring earlier this year.

"It was the first time I came back to Liverpool since I left in 2016," he told liverpoolfc.com. "It was nice to come back and see the guys. It was my first experience to play for the legends, but obviously I tried to enjoy it as much as possible. At the end of the day, we managed to win the game, which is good, but





Foundation supports more than

83,000 people

Annual social value contribution of

£80 Million

Over 128,000

items donations, mainly food provisions such as hampers, to the local community

50+ Programmes

across our community Hubs and worldwide

Scan

to donate



generally I think it's a brilliant day for each of us to come back again to play at Anfield and to help the good cause. It's perfect.

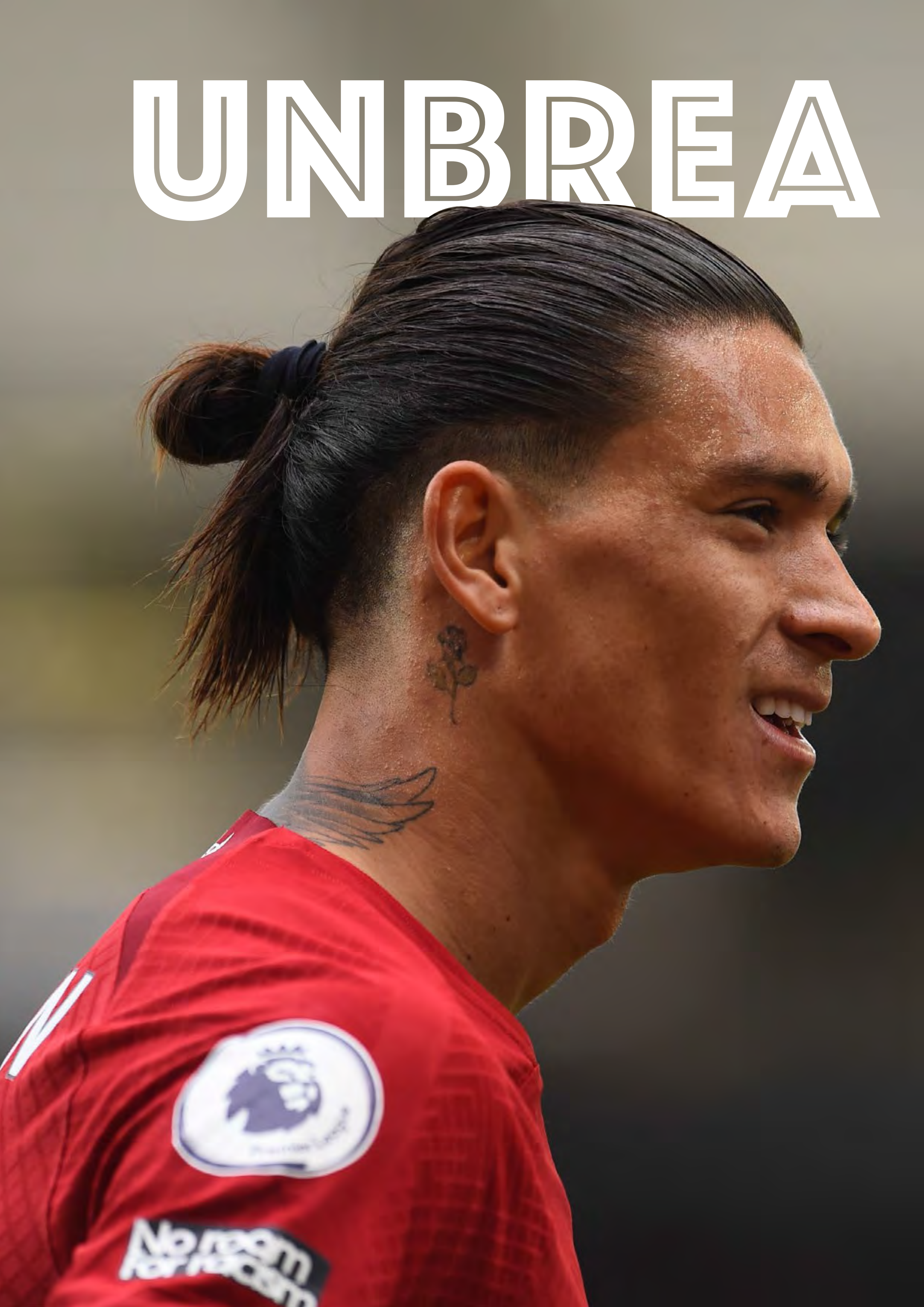
"I was obviously a little bit nervous to come back again and obviously the stadium changed a little bit. But anyway, to play for Liverpool, it was always an honour for me – it's no different if I was a professional now.

"I enjoyed the day and hopefully in the future I can get more of these kinds of games."

An Anfield crowd of 30,896 raised significant funds for the LFC Foundation and the money will support a variety of programmes, including #iWill – a young person's social-action movement – plus local community and football projects.

Charity partners Cash for Kids and IntoUniversity will also receive donations to support their outstanding work across the Liverpool City Region while Forever Reds – the official LFC former players association that provides support to the club's former players in need of care – will also receive a proportion of the proceeds.

And when you've just seen Xabi Alonso run the midfield in a 2-1 Anfield win against Manchester United to raise money for so many good causes, what's not to love?


UNBREA
No room

KABLE



The famous 'Never Give Up' slogan on Mo Salah's t-shirt could apply to the mindset of Darwin Nunez, a striker who's had his own setbacks in the past but always come back fighting



WHEN I WAS A CHILD WE WENT TO PLAY FOOTBALL BAREFOOT. WE PLAYED ON THE STONES, WE PLAYED ON CONCRETE STREETS. ONE OF US ALWAYS ENDED UP HURT AND SOMEONE ELSE WOULD HAVE A BANDAGE ON THEIR TOE, BUT IT WAS LOVELY TO DO BECAUSE WE COMPETED A LOT



DARWIN, CAN YOU DESCRIBE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD IN URUGUAY?

Growing up in Uruguay was very nice because you can do many things.

For me, in the time I was a child, I didn't get the chance to have an iPad or a mobile phone. But the good thing was that I always had a football in my hand. When I came home from school, I wanted to go and play with my friends in the neighbourhood.

At school I always tried to keep the ball tucked under my arm, and I had arguments with the teachers because they always told me off. After all, I had the ball with me all the time, and I wouldn't let go of it. And they told me off because I had to study!

So I tried to give it up so I could study. The study part of it worked out very well and I finished primary school. After I studied at secondary school I then dedicated myself to football. I told my parents I would focus on football and stop studying because that's something I'd loved since I was a child.

When I was a child it hardly rained at all [and] we went to play football barefoot. We played on the stones, we played on concrete streets. One of us always ended up hurt and someone else would have a bandage on their toe, but it was lovely to do because we competed a lot. After all, we played for one euro, and of course, everyone wanted to win because with that euro you

could buy a cola or a juice – so everyone wanted to win!

My childhood was very nice and I always remember it very fondly.

WHAT'S YOUR HOMETOWN ARTIGAS LIKE?

It is a small town on the Brazilian border. I think there are about 3,000 people, so you can walk everywhere and you are wherever you want to be in two minutes.

People have always supported me a lot, especially my childhood friends from the neighbourhood and I still keep in touch with them today because I grew up with them. You don't have to change, even if you are in different situations. You always keep in touch with your childhood friends, because they are the ones who have been there since you were a kid.

To tell the truth, it's been a year and a bit since I've been to Artigas and I really want to go and see my friends, to be with them. Next year I'm definitely going to try to go and see them.

HOW WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FAMILY?

Again I've been lucky as the family has always been together, always very united. I thank my parents a lot because they always made an effort and also many sacrifices to help my brother and me. I am very grateful to them. Today, I try to give them the best because they deserve it.



And the truth is that I am pleased and lucky to have my family because we have always been united and they are always very supportive of me in everything – when things go wrong, when things go right – so I am very happy with my family and lucky to have them.

WE UNDERSTAND YOUR BROTHER JUNIOR STOPPED PLAYING FOOTBALL TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY?

Yes, my brother was an excellent player. He was at Penarol at 14 or 15 years old. I don't remember too well the exact ages. And then Chueco Perdomo, who was Penarol's scout, went to Artigas to see me play and he told my mother that he was going to take me too. She said, "No, no, no – you already took one, leave the other one here!"

Of course I went and I did the pre-season, but I didn't stay. I went back to Artigas. I came back sad, of course, because when you go, you want to stay and start a new journey. But fortunately I was able to go back and they gave me a second chance. Juan Chauvin was the co-ordinator there, so he told me that I was going to stay and, well, then I was with my brother and we lived together in the Penarol house.

They told us it's where all the players stayed when they came to the club from the inland part of the country. We stayed there and it was excellent.

We had all the food we needed, people to look after us. Then a family problem arose and my brother had to move away from football and support my mum. He told me to stay, that I was going to go far and that's what happened. I stayed and I made it.

YOU SUFFERED A SERIOUS KNEE INJURY DURING YOUR TIME AT PENAROL…

Yes, it was in 2018. I was 18 years old and I was doing very well at the time. I was going to go to the Under-20s national team as well, and of course, they had told me that I was going to play the next game with Penarol, in the First Division. And that's exactly what would have happened, but first I had to play a match in the Third Division.

We were playing on Alianza's pitch, a team that is now in 'la C' [Primera Division Amateur] and the truth is that I was doing very well in that match and we won the game with my goal.

They were all bigger than me and, well, I was happy to be there and to have the chance to play with them. However, I misstepped and jumped on a ball, and when I misstepped, my knee gave out. That's when I spent a year-and-a-half without being able to play and I missed a lot, and honestly, I was on the verge of leaving for Artigas again, of giving up playing.

I didn't want to hear anymore because I wanted to come back. I wanted to play and as the time went by and I was still in pain, I couldn't do that. To be honest, I felt very sad but my family, as I told you before, was very united and they always supported me as much as possible and convinced me to continue.

It is a big thanks to them that I am here today because they helped me during that time.

IT WAS A TOUGH TIME MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY…

It's very tough when you are young, and you are not very well-prepared for that kind of thing. You still have a lot of



maturing to do. We are a very humble family and I wanted to go far, you know. At that time, I thought that I wouldn't be able to play anymore and it was a lack of maturity.

So I started to go to a psychologist. He helped me a lot, and then my family supported me very much. I went to a different doctor on my own because at that time I was earning very little and I told my parents I'm going to take some money and I'm going to go to a separate doctor and I'm going to ask him to look at my knee and treat me because I want to keep playing, I don't want to give up.

So when I got my monthly salary, I went with a friend to see a doctor who was a friend of his. He looked at my knee and put me back on the right path. After a while I didn't feel any pain at all and that's when I felt so happy and I said, "Now I'm going to get my act together and I'm going to start from scratch." And that's where I started from and I gave it my all.

ONCE YOU HAD MOVED TO EUROPE WITH ALMERIA, YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO THANK YOUR PARENTS…

During those days when I was injured, my mum would spend the night crying because I couldn't play. I always came home sad and crying, that I couldn't take it anymore, that I was in pain and of course, my family felt it.

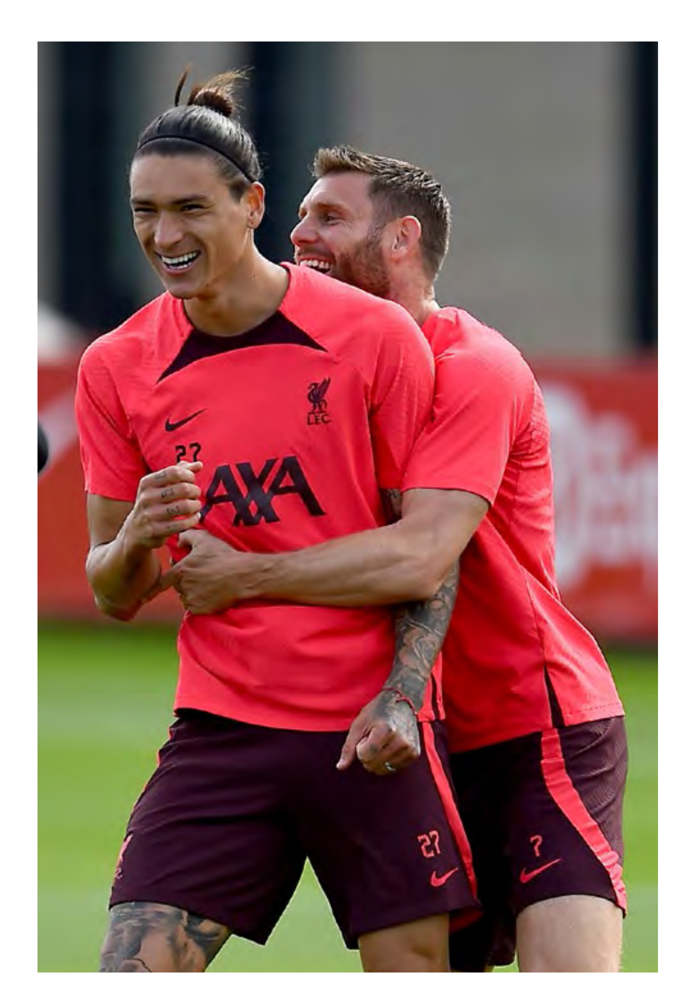
My mum felt very bad and, of course, I told her when I got my first salaries, the first thing I was going to do was buy her a house and that's what I did.

I bought her a farm in Artigas and today she is there and she is very happy with the animals; the horses and the dogs. She has plenty to keep her busy.

THEN YOU WENT FROM SPAIN TO PORTUGAL, ALMERIA TO BENFICA. HOW WAS LISBON?

It was good. I did very well in my year at Almeria and there were





already rumours that I could leave for Benfica. I was very happy that they gave me that opportunity. For me it was a huge step and I spent two years at Benfica. It helped me to keep learning a lot of things, to keep gaining experience.

The first year, as everyone knows, went badly for me because of a knee injury. But the second year went very well on an individual basis and I was very happy and proud because it was the result of all the hard work and day-to-day sacrifices you have to make.

And also my family situation too. With the arrival of my son everything changed, everything started to go better. I'm grateful for the support of my wife too. She is always there for me and that also helped me a lot with the change.

At Benfica everything helped me to gain experience and keep my humility, always keeping my feet on the ground. I am very happy for that time and those experiences and now I hope to make an impact with Liverpool.

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS SEASON?

The Premier League is very competitive, and we have Champions League games too. The coach decides who plays and who doesn't but I always say that I will always try to do my best and support the group and that's my duty.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN NICE TO WIN A MEDAL IN YOUR FIRST COMPETITIVE GAME, THE FA COMMUNITY SHIELD FIXTURE WITH MANCHESTER CITY, TO GET ON THE SCORESHEET AS WELL…

I was a bit nervous, to be honest, which I think was normal because it was a game against City and a final. However, everything went well and I was happy because we won the trophy and everyone in the squad was happy. It was an excellent start to the year, but of course we have to keep working really hard if we want to win more over the course of the season.



WORLD CUP WATCH: URUGUAY

Darwin's Uruguay are one of four South American countries to qualify for the World Cup which starts in Qatar in mid-November. The quartet of finalists from the CONMEBOL region also includes Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador.

Uruguay won eight of their 18 qualifiers, drawing four and losing six to finish third in the standings.

Nunez could come face-to-face with fellow Liverpool forward Diogo Jota when Uruguay play Portugal in their second group game in Lusail on 28 November.

Uruguay, who are managed by their ex-international striker Diego Alonso, face South Korea in their opening fixture in Al Rayyan on 24 November and finish their Group H matches against Ghana in Al Wakrah on 2 December.

La Celeste [The Sky Blue] could also include former Reds duo Luis Suarez and Sebastian Coates in their squad.

FACE TIME

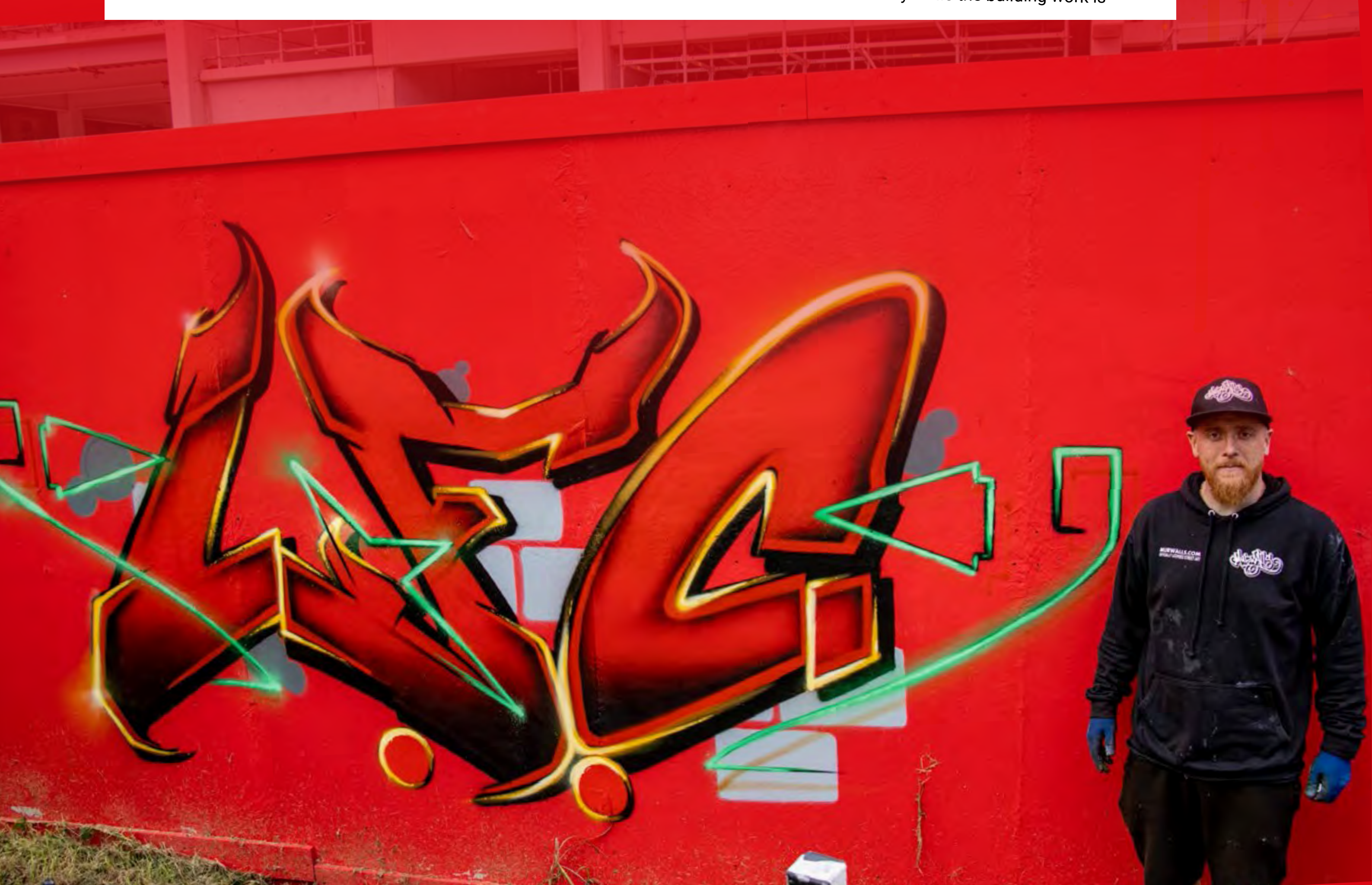
Wondering how they created those incredible murals all along the Anfield Road expansion site? Here's a little glimpse into the street-art craft, with photos courtesy of Courtney Neary/MurWalls

There are fourteen of them in total and if you take a particular fancy to one, you might even be able to buy it when they all go up for auction next year. We're talking about the new long-format mural on the hoardings behind the Anfield Road expansion, featuring Liverpool strikers past and present who have lit up the stadium inside.

Appearing over the same international-break weekend in September which saw the LFC Foundation Legends of the North charity match against Manchester United take place, followed by the women's Merseyside derby, it's been created by a team of 16 artists from MurWalls, the company behind the nearby murals of Jordan Henderson, Steven Gerrard, Ian Rush, Alan Kennedy, Ray Clemence, Ian St John and Roger Hunt.

Former stars Sadio Mane, Divock Origi, Luis Suarez, Dirk Kuyt, Fernando Torres, Robbie Fowler, John Aldridge, Ian Rush and Sir Kenny Dalglish are depicted on one half with two club crests, while modern-day heroes Roberto Firmino, Mohamed Salah, Diogo Jota, Luis Diaz and Darwin Nunez complete the second section. It took around seven hours to finish on the eve of the Legends of the North fixture.

Marc Silver, CEO of MurWalls, said: "We wanted to create some artwork for the community while the building work is








@MURWALLS


@MURWALLS





in progress, and together with LFC we came up with the concept to celebrate the club's attacking legends. Each one is a different style for each individual portrait."

At the end of the Anfield Road development, the artwork will be cut into 14 individual pieces and auctioned off, with all proceeds donated to LFC Foundation and its causes.

Street-art is very much part of modern fan culture and these latest creations bring even more vibrancy to the stadium's matchday neighbourhood, which has changed dramatically over the last few years.

Back in May all-time LFC leading goalscorer Ian Rush was commemorated by a Murwalls artwork











opposite the Main Stand. He called it "absolutely amazing and a great honour." Nearby Sybil Road is now home to three similar creations. Opposite the Trent Alexander-Arnold image, produced in 2019 by artist Akse in association with The Anfield Wrap, is Reds skipper Jordan Henderson holding aloft the Premier League trophy, made by MurWalls and commissioned by Redmen TV to celebrate the 2020 title success.

Next to it is a mural in honour of 1965 FA Cup final goalscorers Ian St John and Roger Hunt, again by MurWalls. The Saint signed it in November 2020 and the passing of both legends in recent times has made it even more evocative.

Reds legend Steven Gerrard and double European Cup-winner Alan Kennedy are the subjects on Anfield's Dinorwic Road, the latter giving his approval in person, along with former goalkeeper Ray Clemence whose portrait on Wylva Road was unveiled by his family in October 2020, a month before he passed away.


Sponsors for 30 years.
Forever fans.
L.F.C.
Carlsberg
Carlsberg
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892
Official Beer Partner



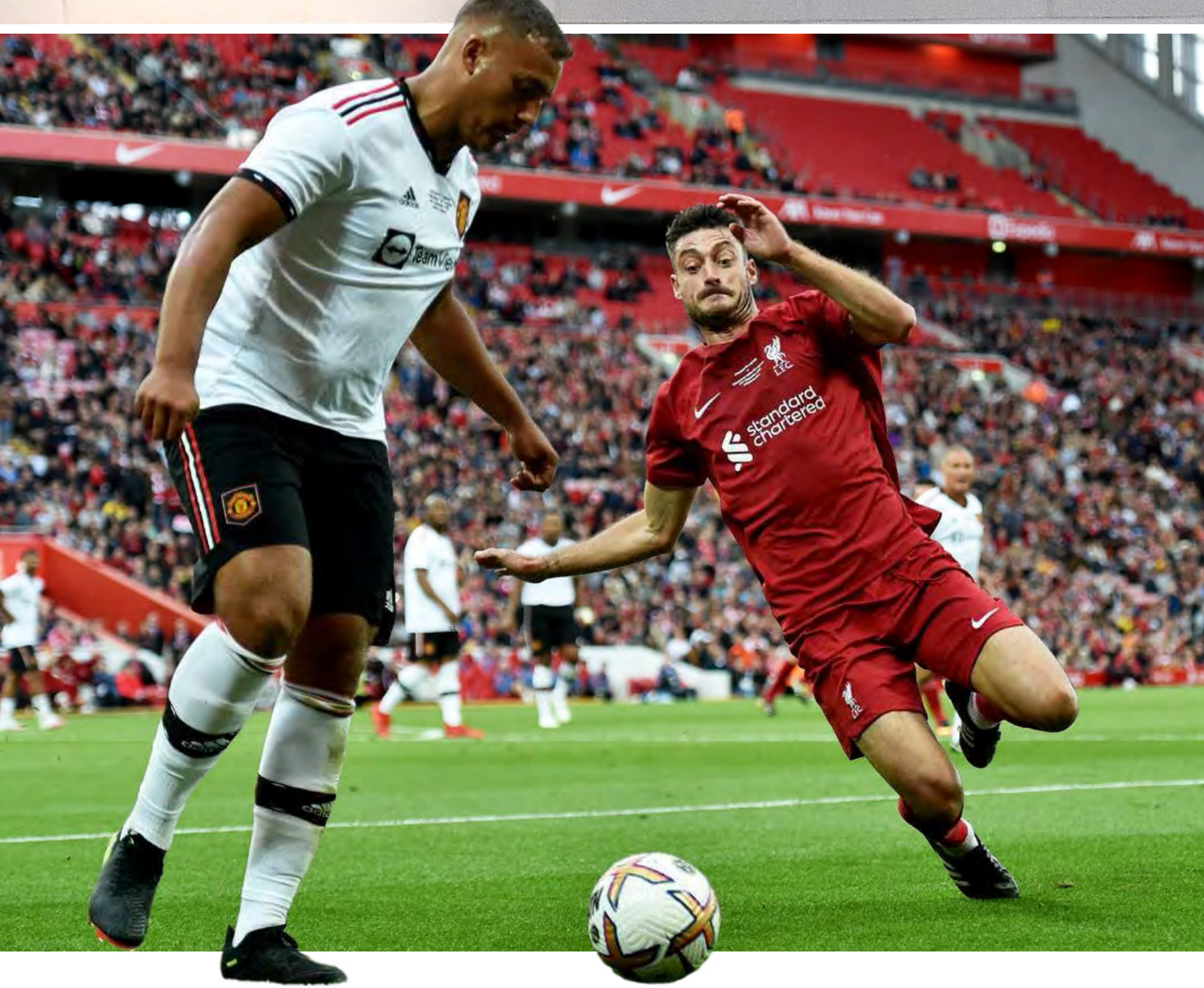
Also last month, while the Annie Road murals may have grabbed most of the headlines, the neighbourhood also unveiled its first house-side, outdoor mural of Jürgen Klopp featuring a line from the Kop's 'I Feel Fine' song.

A collaboration between MurWalls and BOSS Night and covering a whole end-terrace in Randolph Street, it's the work of street artist Humor and took four days to create. Go check it out along with these Anfield Road masterworks.

GREAT TO BE BACK

Following his Anfield return with the Legends, former winger Albert Riera reflects on his LFC career and hails the genius of modern Reds widemen Salah and Diaz





Aside from both playing in Liverpool's midfield at different ends of the Rafael Benitez era, Albert Riera and Igor Biscan also share a post-playing days link. Any guesses? The answer to the teaser lies in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana.

Biscan has enjoyed plenty of success in management since hanging up his boots and has spent the past three years as part of Croatia's national team set-up, working with the Under-21s.

He'd dipped his foot into managerial waters with Croatian third-tier club NK Rudes, winning the title and promotion in 2016/17. His efforts were noticed by Slovenian PrvaLiga [Premier League] club Olimpija Ljubljana and he was appointed head coach for the 2017/18 campaign.

They won the Slovenian league and cup double but he was sacked by former Portsmouth, Leicester City and Sheffield Wednesday owner Milan Mandaric who announced that Biscan's "mission with the club was complete." Igor returned to Croatia, winning the national cup with NK Rijeka before beginning his work with the international squads.

Now Riera, who turned 40 in April, is hoping to emulate Biscan's achievements at Olimpija Ljubljana as he takes his own first steps into the world of football management.

The former Reds winger was appointed to his first head-coach position in July after previously working at one of his former clubs, Galatasaray, as assistant-manager.

His varied playing career took in a dozen clubs in six countries but it ended in Slovenia with spells at NK Zavrc and FC Koper in 2015 and 2016.

Riera, who played 56 games for the Reds between 2008 and 2010 scoring five times and providing seven assists, had long held an ambition to try his hand in management.

As he is keen to stress, it is still early days but he has made a bright start with Ljubljana sitting eight points clear at the top of the PrvaLiga table after their opening ten games.

He says: "It is my first experience as a head coach and, of course, with the first experience I would not expect to manage Liverpool or Real Madrid! I need to earn this grade.

"So far it has been a great experience because the results have been good, but you always know that can change.

"As a football coach, if you don't accept that the day that you start losing you may have to take your bag and go back home, don't take the job.

"So I know I'm ready for this. The most important thing is that I'm enjoying it and I'm not too scared to make mistakes. It is about football so I will make mistakes and I will learn from them. But the most important part of it is having the results because at this level in professional football you need to win games.

"The way that we play is also important to me. I prepare every game in a different way to try to surprise the opponents and I am enjoying it very much.

"Coaching was always something that interested me. In the end you want to grow and you want to improve. As a Spaniard of course I would say that I would like to manage one day in Spain, but if you asked me where I enjoyed it most as a player, I would say in England, in the Premier League.

Interview: William Hughes



"So of course it would be a pleasure one day to manage a Premier League team as well."

Albert hails from Manacor, a town on the island of Mallorca. He started his professional career with the Balearic club before a spell in France with Bordeaux. He returned to Spain in 2005 with Barcelona-based Espanyol. It was during his spell with the 'Periquitos' that he had his first experiences of English football, being loaned out to Manchester City for the second half of the 2005/06 season.

He made 19 appearances for the Citizens under then boss Stuart Pearce, scoring his first Premier League goal in a 3-0 home win over Newcastle United in February 2006.

On his return to Catalonia he helped Espanyol reach the 2006/07 UEFA Cup final but his side lost out to Sevilla in a penalty shoot-out following a 1-1 draw at Hampden Park.

His abilities as an orthodox winger had impressed Rafael Benitez and on the 2008/09 transfer-deadline day, the Liverpool manager made his move (right). Riera signed a four-year contract with the Reds who paid a fee of £8 million. It was reported that Merseyside rivals Everton had also agreed a deal with Espanyol but the player favoured a move to Anfield.

Benitez said: "Riera has the qualities we were looking for. He's a left-footer who normally plays on the left wing. He's good in the air, strong, powerful and a good crosser of the ball.

"He's the kind of player we have been talking about. He can beat players and get good deliveries into the area for our strikers. We've known about him for a long time, since he was at Mallorca and then through his career with Bordeaux, Manchester City and Espanyol.



Arriving at Anfield back in 2008 as a Rafa signing

"He can talk English and of course he knows the Premier League, which is a big bonus. Usually foreign players need time when they go to a new country, but Riera already knows the league and the style of football."

Wearing the no11 shirt, Albert made the perfect start, debuting in a 2-1 Premier League victory over arch-rivals Manchester United at Anfield.

He spent two seasons with the Reds before injury issues and an increasingly strained relationship with Benitez led to his departure and he linked up with Greek club Olympiacos in the summer of 2010.

As he reflects on his spell at Anfield, he admits it was a spell of two halves. "Well, they were two totally different seasons. The first year we finished two points behind Man United and we were fighting till the end. It was a fantastic year and we had a fantastic team with a lot of individuality within that.

"[Fernando] Torres had probably his best year in Liverpool that season. But yes, in the end, we couldn't win the title and then the next year that probably had an effect.

"Maybe it was because of the effort of this previous year that we were a bit frustrated that in the end we couldn't win this championship. Then the next year we came probably…I wouldn't say without the same motivation but with a bit of frustration. Then we had many small details that made the difference.

"Personally I had two injuries that I'd never had before. I went to Serbia to have different therapies to try to be back physically again at my best level. But that year I couldn't. When not all players can give their best, in the end the group can feel this. So that was a little bit the problem in the second year and it was not the season that we expected.

"I felt it was time to change. That's why some players left and also at the time there was a change of the manager too. But that's football and you have to accept sometimes that that's how it comes."

Albert had just turned 28 when he left Liverpool and once fully recovered from his injury troubles he went on to win a hat-trick of league titles in consecutive years with Olympiacos in 2010/11, then Galatasaray in 2011/12 and 2012/13. »

He returned to these shores for a brief spell with Watford in 2013/14 before joining Udinese and then returning to RCD Mallorca before seeing out his career as he played in Slovenia for the first time.

He's a keen student of the current Liverpool team and the Reds' rivalry with Manchester City has informed much of Riera's thinking in his own approach to management. For instance, he highlights the difference in the way he used to operate on the wing to the methods employed by players such as Mohamed Salah and Luis Diaz more than a decade later.

"In my time we were typical wingers like the old times – you know, playing close to the wing and crossing and going one against one with the full-back.

"Then two or three years later, they started changing and inverted the wingers so you have a left-footer like Mo Salah on the right, and then a right-footed player such as Diaz on the left side. So the wingers started going more inside and scoring more goals because when you're going towards the goal and attacking the goal more, you are closer to it than before.

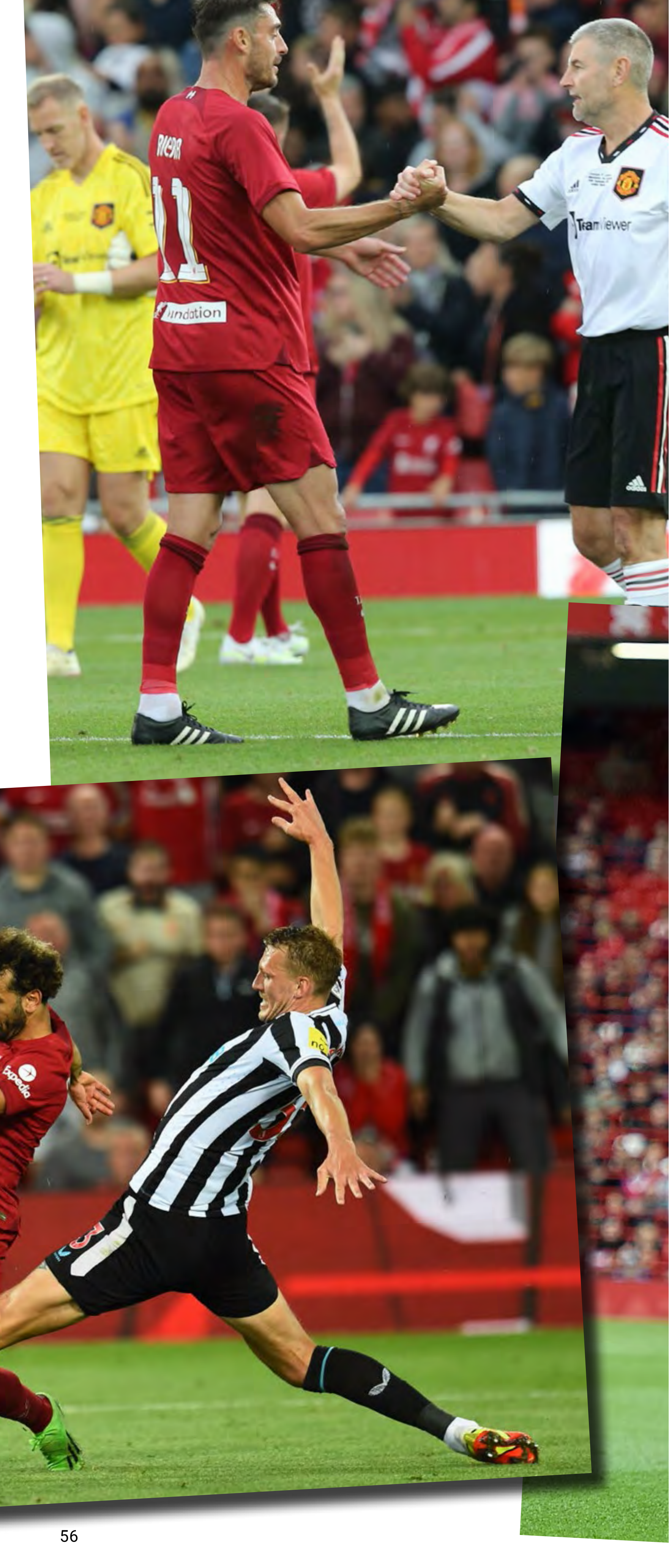
"So in this way football has changed and I think for the better. But sometimes I'm still missing those kinds of players that can go out to the flanks and make the difference from the outside also!

"I will say that for example in my team I don't like to lose this kind of player who can go one-against-one or show off his dribbling on the outside, and also in modern football they can be so important.

"When you watch players like Salah, even when they are starting from the line, in the end it is not their finishing position. So you can see how they are opening the pitch but in the end they can finish inside which is also great.

"Nowadays Liverpool is also based on fast transitions, opening up the defending players because you have two players on the lines, but yet in the end these players are like strikers as they are finishing inside. It is very interesting to see."

Riera gave Reds fans another glimpse into his own brand



Albert admires the evolution of wing-play exemplified by Mo


On the front foot versus Hull City in September 2009

of wing-play when he returned to Anfield last month to line up for the Liverpool FC Legends. After coming off the bench, he played a part in the winning goal in the 2-1 win over Manchester United, winning a tackle and providing a key pass in the build-up to Florent Sinama-Pongolle's winner at the Kop end.

"It was great to be back and great to help raise money for the LFC Foundation too because that was the most important aspect of why we were there," he explains.

"Some of my team-mates were the ones that I played with in my time at Liverpool [Xabi Alonso, Fabio Aurelio, Glen Johnson, Robbie Keane, Maxi Rodriguez, Martin Skrtel and Andriy Voronin]. Then there were others that were younger or older than me and they are from another generation. It was nice to share more experiences and anecdotes with all of them and it was really good to come back.

"You could see that when we are together we are all talking about football. Of course we still want to be fit but the level can't be like it was when we were playing!

"As I say, it was nice that we could spend time together, play at a wonderful stadium again and support the work of the LFC Foundation."

Now Albert's focus is back on Olimpija Ljubljana and winning his first silverware as a manager.

"Let's see. It's still early and I am enjoying the moment but in football you cannot look too far ahead. You cannot look at what you did in the past or what you will do in the next two games. It's game-by-game and your focus is taken up on today, not wasting time expecting what might happen.

"In football, while you are thinking about what might happen, maybe you have been sacked already and then you don't have time to think about the future!"

CARABAO
DO YOU LIKE ME NOW?

Liverpool begin their EFL Cup defence with a third-round tie against Derby County at Anfield on Wednesday 9 November but how much can you remember about last season's triumphant campaign?



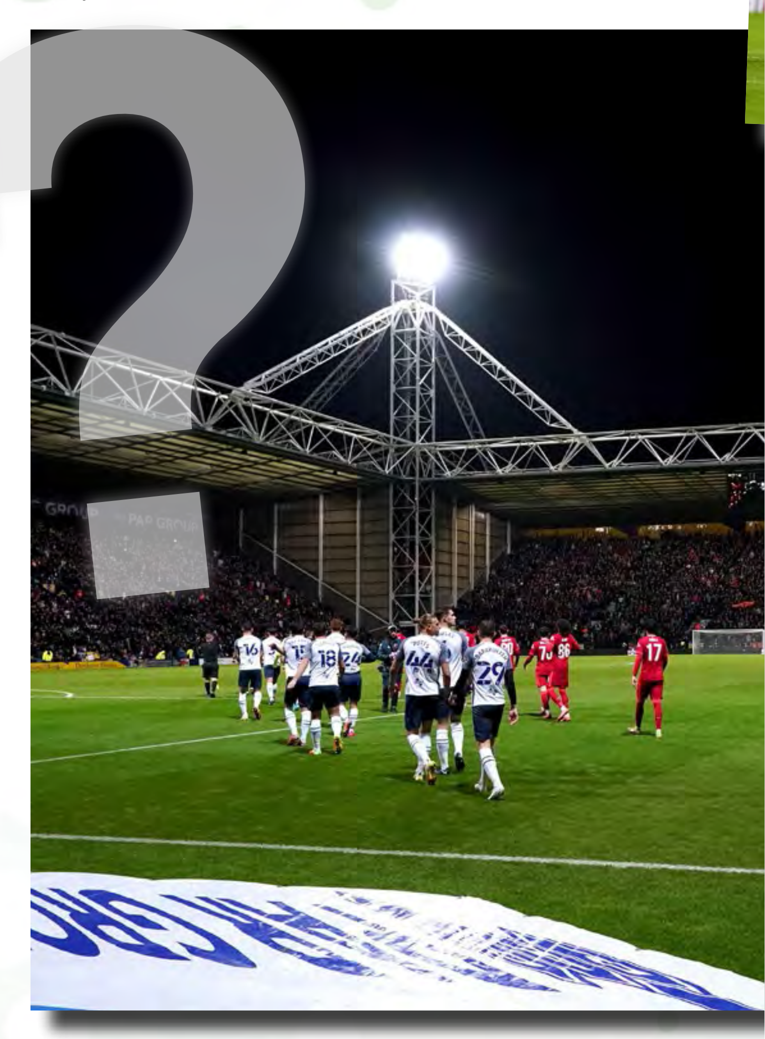
1 Let's start with an easy one. After beating Chelsea at Wembley on penalties, how many times had the Reds won the League Cup in total?

2 The campaign began with a 3-0 third-round win at Norwich City. Who captained Liverpool for the first time that night?

3 Three teenagers also made their first-team debuts, two in the starting XI and one from the bench. Can you name all three?

4 And who scored his fifth goal for Liverpool that night, setting a random club record of the most goals scored by any LFC player who had never netted for the Reds at Anfield?

5 Next up was a fourth-round trip to Preston North End (below) and first-team debuts for two more Liverpool Academy starlets. Can you name them both?





6 There was also a Liverpool player in the PNE team, but can you recall which on-loan defender faced the Reds at Deepdale?

7 Remember Divock Origi's scorpion-kick goal (right)? Thought so, but who had the blocked shot that led to Big Div's moment of improvisation?

8 And what was the name of the stand at Deepdale that Liverpool's 5,000-strong away support were in?

9 We're at the quarter-final stage already and that means a crazy 3-3 draw against Leicester City at Anfield. Jamie Vardy put the Foxes 2-0 up, who got Liverpool's first goal back?

10 And which centre-back made his Anfield debut that night before being replaced at half-time by Ibrahima Konate?

11 James Maddison made it 3-1, but second-half goals from Diogo Jota and Takumi Minamino sent the game to penalties. At which end of Anfield was the shoot-out at?

12 How many Leicester penalties did Caoimhin Kelleher save and who netted the winning spot-kick for the Reds?

13 The semi-final first leg against Arsenal at Anfield finished 0-0, but which goalkeeper made his League Cup debut for Liverpool that evening?

CARABAO DO YOU LIKE ME NOW?



14 The Gunners had a player sent off for a waist-high tackle on Diogo Jota. Who got his marching orders?



15 Speaking of Jota, he created a piece of Liverpool League Cup history in the second leg at the Emirates Stadium (below). What was it?

16 And who became the first 17-year-old to play for Liverpool in a semi-final?

17 So it was off to Wembley to face Chelsea in the final, but Thiago suffered heartbreak after getting injured in the warm-up. Who replaced him in the starting XI? And who was added to the squad as a substitute?

18 Who scored for Liverpool in the 67th minute only for the goal to be controversially disallowed by VAR for a foul by Virgil van Dijk on Reece James in an offside position?

19 Everyone knows that Caoimhin Kelleher scored the winning penalty before sub Chelsea goalie Kepa Arrizabalaga blasted his spot-kick over, but can you name all 10 of Liverpool's outfield players who converted? And add 10 bonus points if you can do it in the EXACT order…

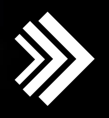
20 Jordan Henderson lifted the Carabao Cup as the travelling Kop celebrated, but how many different trophies in total had Hendo lifted as Reds skipper when he held it high into the air?

ANSWERS: 1. Nine; 2. Joe Gomez; 3. Conor Bradley, Kaide Gordon and Tyler Morton; 4. Takumi Minamino; 5. Harvey Blair and Owen Beck; 6. Sepp van den Berg; 7. Neco Williams; 8. The Bill Shankly Kop; 9. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain; 10. Billy Koumetio; 11. Anfield Road end; 12. Kelleher saved two penalties (from Luke Thomas and Ryan Bertrand) before Diogo Jota struck the winning spot-kick; 13. Alisson Becker; 14. Granit Xhaka; 15. Jota became the first LFC player to score twice in an away League Cup semi-final; 16. Kaide Gordon; 17. Naby Keita started and Harvey Elliott came on; 19. First up was James Milner, then 2 Fabinho, 3 Virgil van Dijk, 4 Trent Alexander-Arnold, 5 Mo Salah, 6 Diogo Jota, 7 Divock Origi, 8 Andy Robertson, 9 Harvey Elliott, 10 Ibrahima Konate; 20. Five (Champions League, UEFA Super Cup, FIFA Club World Cup, Premier League and League Cup – the FA Cup and Community Shield made it six and seven later in the year).


UEFA
FOUNDATION
for children

TSIMI TSIMI TSIMI

That's how his song goes, and everyone's favourite Greek Scouser hopes the Kop will be singing it this season as the Reds recharge to chase more honours



Words: Chris Mcloughlin

It's a couple of days after Liverpool's 3-3 draw with Brighton at Anfield and Kostas Tsimikas is in defiant mood. The Reds made a terrible start against the Seagulls, conceding twice to Leandro Trossard in the opening 17 minutes. They responded by showing character to turn the game around and lead 3-2 courtesy of a Bobby Firmino double and an Adam Webster own-goal, but then came an unwelcome sting in the tail.

Brighton had failed to take a single shot on goal between going two up and 3-2 down, yet when they needed a goal Liverpool couldn't control the game. Trossard fired in an 83rd-minute equaliser at the far-post and for the fifth time in seven Premier League games the Redmen had dropped points.

With leaders Arsenal beating Spurs 3-1 and Manchester City thrashing Manchester United 6-3 on the same day – ahead of Liverpool playing both sides in their next two league games – not many Kopites will have watched Match of the Day until the end to see the Premier League table. But if you think anyone inside the Liverpool camp is writing anything off after seven league matches and an admittedly poor start to the season, you are very much mistaken.

"Nothing is finished yet," says Tsimikas. "We have to bounce back. If you remember, last year we were 15 points back and at the end we were so close to winning the Premier League.

"So nothing is finished. First of all, we have to win football games, but from the start of the season we set the same goals and we will go for them. Last year we went so close, so why not this year? I think the team will bounce back and will be 100 per cent ready again."

To retain such belief when many supporters are reassessing Liverpool's aims for the 2022/23 campaign is admirable, but it doesn't explain why the Reds have made such a slow start. Tsimikas has his own views on the matter.

"Last year was a very difficult year for us, we played so many games. I think at one point that was why we didn't start so well, but I will not find excuses. We have got good players and we have to be focused 100 per cent for every challenge we face.

"I think we are not in a good moment. It is not about the tactics or about the players – we have had the same tactics for a number of years. The team has been very successful over these years and the players are the same as last year.

"So I think it is a bad moment for us and we have to go through it, we have to fight through it. It is not a time for excuses or to be saying 'this is not good' or whatever.

"We are the same team as last year and last year we fought for all the trophies. In all the competitions we were there and we won two trophies with exactly the same team, so I think it's a bad moment.



From the start of the season we set the same goals and we will go for them. Last year we went so close, so why not this year? I think the team will bounce back and will be 100 per cent ready again

"We conceded a lot of goals, we haven't played compactly as a defence. I think it's a bad start for us, for all the team, but we have to go through it all together. In one team everybody defends, all eleven players, so I think we have to be all together to defend properly.

"The thing now is we have to react. We have to show to everybody we are back as a team again. We have to go through this difficult moment, but this is why we are a team and we have this family.

"From the bad moments we can rise again and we have to do exactly that."

Jürgen Klopp has admitted confidence, more precisely a lack of it, is a factor while early-season injuries and a stop-start September have undoubtedly contributed to the Reds' lack of rhythm.

One of the injuries was suffered by Andy Robertson and that has opened the door for Tsimikas to play more often at left-back. The 26-year-old Greek international is naturally keen to make the best of the opportunity and reveals that while some players might hope the team-mate in direct competition for their place doesn't show their best form, Robertson has actively been trying to help Tsimikas succeed in a red shirt.

"First of all, Andy is a very good person and a world-class player," he says. "Whatever I need when I play, he is always there to help me and to show me what I can do better, to help me to find where I have to cross, where is the gap.

"I also help him when I am on the bench and I see the game from

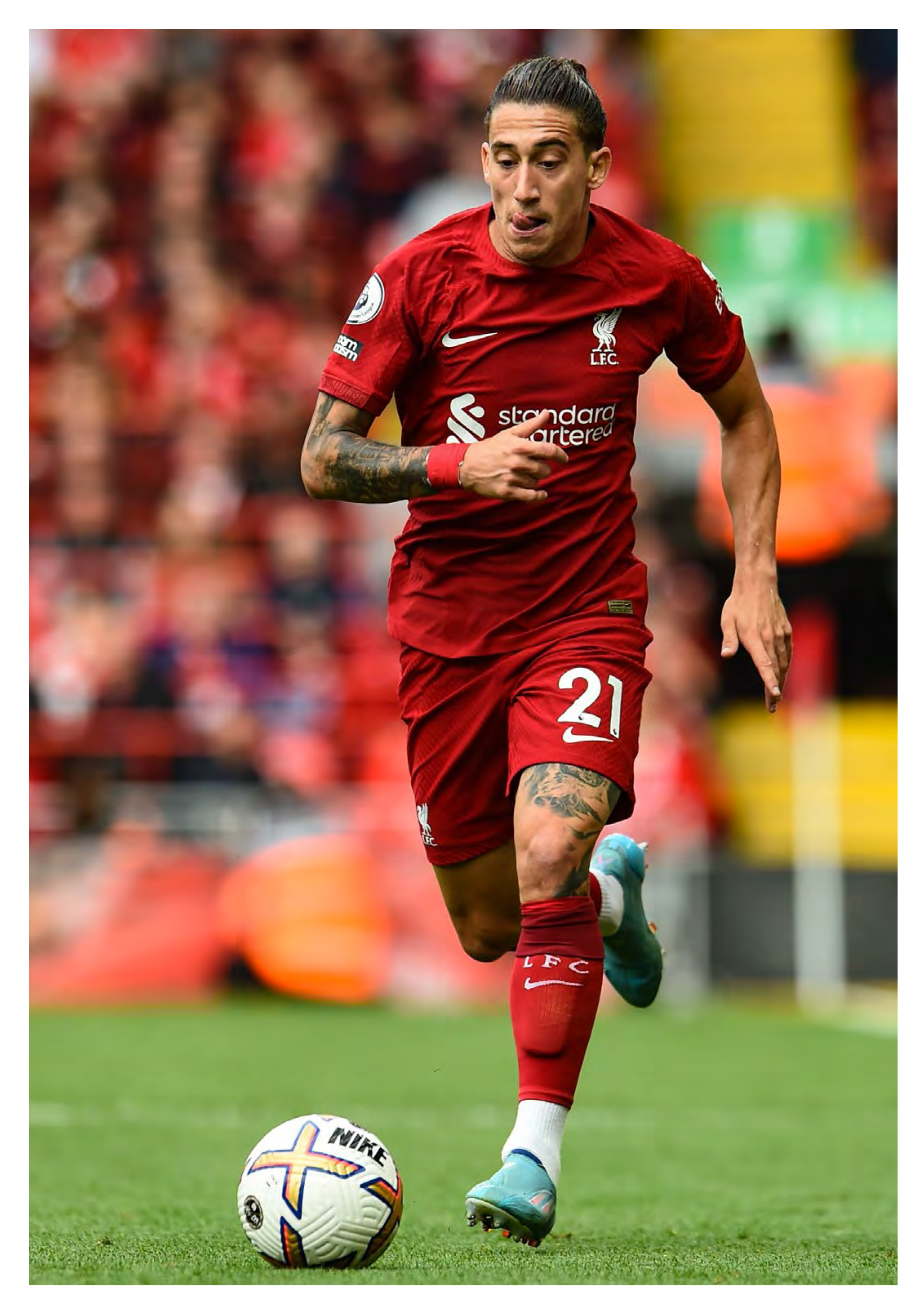


outside the pitch. He's a good guy, we spend time in the dressing-room and we always speak about everything and I really thank him for all of this.

"When I have the chance to play, to show myself, then first of all I am thinking I have to create chances and to give 100 per cent in defence.

"I have to make assists. This is my goal. When I make an assist I celebrate like I have scored a goal because this is the most important thing for me.




standard
chartered
L.F.C.
21
NIKE
LFC

"I'm very happy when I play and when I help my team. Whenever the manager gives me the chance I will be there and I will be 100 per cent trying to make more assists for my team."

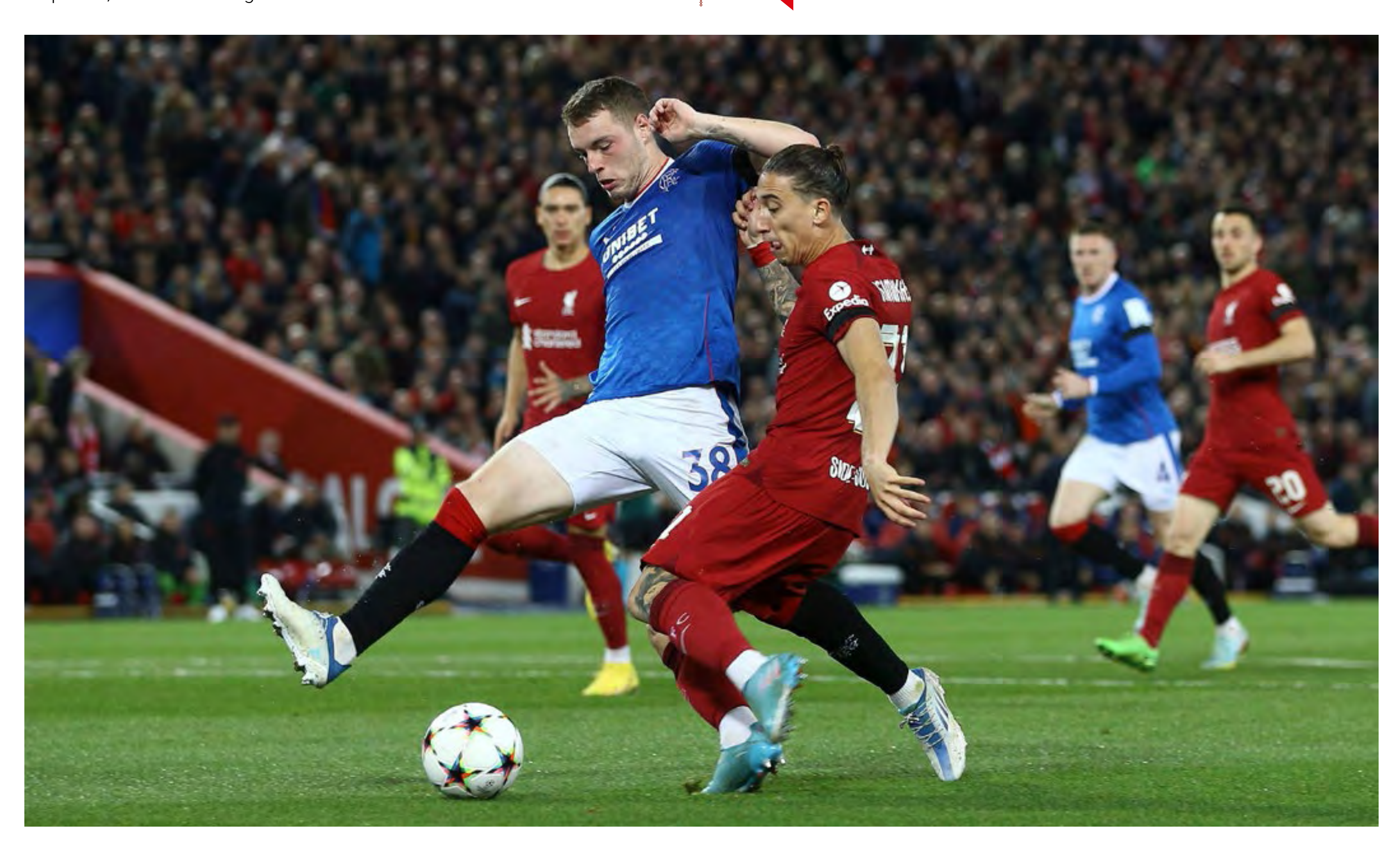
The stats show that creating goals is one of his best attributes. The Rangers game was Tsimikas' 41st appearance for Liverpool since arriving from Olympiakos in 2020. He has started 26 of those games and come on in the other 15, so his tally of nine assists is impressive. As is his win-ratio of 68.3%.

Six of his assists came last season across four different competitions and this time around he has already created three goals. Two were for Fabio Carvalho and Luis Diaz after coming on as a substitute in the 9-0 win against Bournemouth, and it was from his corner that Joel Matip headed home the winning goal against Ajax in the Champions League.

If you add to that his two assists at home to Benfica in the Champions League last season then four of the Greek Scouser's last five assists have been from corners or free-kicks, arguably making Tsimikas the most under-the-radar quality deadball-taker in the league.

He's also half-decent from penalties, as we saw in the FA Cup final, but shoot-out goals don't count in the statistics and

> I want to improve, always I want to improve myself. This makes me better as a player. Always I have to prepare myself before the game so in the game I am 100 per cent there because we saw against Brighton what can happen if you are not 100 per cent focused



that leaves Kostas as the Greek Rob Jones – full of assists but goalless from full-back!

"I just want to score a goal for Liverpool," he admits. "Hopefully soon in the Premier League and then maybe later in a Champions League fixture. But, for now, I just want to score my first goal for Liverpool."

Tsimikas had an opportunity to get one, albeit from a tight angle, during the Merseyside derby at Goodison Park last month, but couldn't hit the target. That missed chance will be something he analysed as he looks back at every touch of the ball he makes in every match for Liverpool to learn from what he did well and what he can do better.

"Always after the game I try to see the game back," he explains. "All the times when I touched the ball, I try to understand why I did this and why I did that.

"I want to improve, always I want to improve myself. This makes me better as a player. Always I have to prepare myself before the game so in the game I am 100 per cent there because we saw against Brighton what can happen if you are not 100 per cent focused.

"Everybody knows Brighton is a very good team, they play good football, so I think we saw from the start we were not so focused and ready for this game. That's why we conceded two goals."

If you happened to buy the Liverpool v Brighton matchday programme then you'll have read how it was one of LFC's fitness coaches who nicknamed Kostas 'the Greek Scouser'. By the end of last season he was preferring to be called 'the Scouse Greek', but whichever moniker he goes by there is a message he wants to get across to match-going Reds.

Back in March, while filming a 'Call Yourself A Team-mate' game show alongside Diogo Jota and Thiago as part of a promotional video for club trading partners ThinkMarkets, the three players had



to get a team-mate somewhere else inside the AXA Training Centre to sing a line from the song Liverpool supporters have for them.

"I've got no song, bro," replied a frowning Kostas as Jota and Thiago fell about laughing before the trio headed off one-by-one to convince one of the lads to help them out.

Thiago persuaded Jordan Henderson to sing 'Thiago, Thiago Alcantara' while having his breakfast while Diogo managed to get Harvey Elliott to break off from a game of pool to sing 'Oh, he wears the number 20...'

Off went Kostas to find a creative team-mate, but it didn't start well. "I'm not singing!" laughed Trent Alexander-Arnold. "Have you got a song?" added Hendo before pointing at Ibrahima Konate and telling him to get involved.

In the end, big Ibou freestyled for Kostas by rapping a song about him in French (and used a word we can't possibly mention in a family magazine) but it was never going to catch fire on the Kop, even if we do use the odd French word (allez allez allez!) to back the boys.

The Call Yourself A Team-mate video went viral and the Liverpool fanbase responded with a song for Tsimikas. The reworking of ABBA's *Gimme Gimme Gimme* to 'Tsimi Tsimi Tsimi' was much to the delight of our no21 – who isn't shy of singing it himself – but now he wants your help again.

I'm very happy about that [his song], but I still haven't really heard it in the stadium. So I'm really looking forward to hearing it from the fans inside Anfield!

"I'm very happy about that [his song], but I still haven't really heard it in the stadium," he says. "So I'm really looking forward to hearing it from the fans inside Anfield!

"The words say: 'Tsimi, Tsimi, Tsimi, our Kostas Tsimikas, his passport says he's Greek but we all know that he's Scouse!' to the tune of the ABBA song *Gimme Gimme Gimme*.

"I think 'Tsimi, Tsimi, Tsimi' is better than the original song! I'm very, very happy for that and this makes my time here in Liverpool more special, but I want to hear it inside Anfield..."

Over to you Reds, over to you...











CHRISTMAS *Party Nights* AT ANFIELD



Come and join us this festive season for an unforgettable night of celebrating!

Collect your welcome drink, and then enjoy our festive street food, be amazed by a magician, take part in a meet and greet with an LFC former player and try your luck on the casino tables. Then sample our cocktail bar menu before dancing the night away with our DJ whilst being in with a chance to win a VIP matchday hospitality experience for 2 people!

Anfield – Where Great Events Happen.

LIVERPOOLFC.COM/CHRISTMASPARTY
OR CALL 0151 264 2222

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER • FRIDAY 9TH DECEMBER • SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER
FRIDAY 16TH DECEMBER • SATURDAY 17TH DECEMBER

STRONG FOR EUROPE

Three impressive wins out of three have left the young Reds in a great position to progress in this season's UEFA Youth League



Liverpool's Under-19s have made a fine start to their UEFA Youth League campaign, winning their opening three matches and thus defeating each of the other teams in their group. It leaves the young Reds in a strong position to progress to the knockout stages of the tournament in February, although they still have away games in Glasgow and Amsterdam to come before they sign off against Napoli on the opening afternoon of November.

Coach Barry Lewtas saw his charges produce an excellent 2-1 win at Napoli on matchday one before running out convincing 4-0 winners against Ajax on matchday two. The Reds then cemented their position at the top of their group at the halfway point with a 4-1 defeat of Rangers at Kirkby on 4 October.

Lewtas believes the experiences the tournament offers is invaluable.

"It's a great competition for the players and it's also a great competition for the staff as well," he explains.

"It's a really good learning experience for everyone. I have been very fortunate to have been involved in quite a few campaigns now in the UEFA Youth League and it's very exciting. The players are excited as well. We did well in the competition last season reaching the quarter-finals, and we want to do well in it again.

"The last few times we have played Napoli in the group, they have always been tough games and we have had to dig deep. We will have to do that going away to Rangers and Ajax too but we still have three fantastic ties to play and we are really looking forward to it.

"It has been a really good start. We've had tough games against good teams and they have all posed different kinds of problems. Napoli away, we had to play on astroturf, the heat was a factor and they are a tough team to play against.

"Ajax, they obviously have a reputation of producing players and I thought we were excellent on that particular day and we made a really strong start against Rangers. It's pleasing to win the games and have nine points but I think the manner in which we have won them is unbelievably pleasing."

Coming up against Continental opponents has afforded the players an opportunity to test themselves against those different styles of football

and also replicate the first-team experience of travelling away.

"It's brilliant, the whole experience of it," adds Lewtas. "Some of our players in the squad this season hadn't played in this competition before, so it is their first experiences of travelling away with us and representing the football club.

"The game is the most important bit first and foremost, but in terms of preparation for these matches, it is different to what the lads are normally used to. The players and staff also get to go to all of the first-team group games home and away and that is a real plus as well."

Next up for the Reds are trips to play away to Rangers and Ajax later this month.

Lewtas says: "Away games are tough. You have to get used to playing on different surfaces that you are not used to. We need to understand how difficult it is to go away from home in this competition, put our style into the game and obviously try to strive to get the three points.

"These games are never easy, but we are really excited and looking forward to the challenges we will face."

The Reds have shown a positive approach in all their games so far, building on a promising start in their regular programme of league games at Under-21s and U18s levels too.

"I'm really pleased with lots of our game at the moment and the real beauty is we have got some boys really performing well. The atmosphere in training has been great in terms of how the boys are responding to what we want from them. We are seeing that in the performances.

"We know that there are certain parts of our game we want to get better at, as players and staff, and we are all on the same page with that. I'm really happy with where we are at."

THE STORY SO FAR

MATCHDAY ONE

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2022 STADIO GIUSEPPE PICCOLO
NAPOLI 1 (IACCARINO PEN)
LIVERPOOL 2 (DOAK, CANNONIER)

Liverpool made a flying start to their UEFA Youth League campaign with an impressive 2-1 win in Naples.

Winger Ben Doak scored the first goal and later set up a second-half winner for forward Oakley Cannonier soon after midfielder Gennaro Iaccarino had equalised with a penalty at the sweltering Stadio Giuseppe Piccolo.

Coach Barry Lewtas' team dominated large parts of the Group A opener in southern Italy but required a superb late save by Harvey Davies to preserve a fully-deserved three points.

The young Reds assumed control of the contest early on and boasted a constant threat out-wide through the pace and directness of Doak and fellow wide-man Trent Kone-Doherty, the latter producing Liverpool's first attempt which was saved by the legs of Napoli keeper Claudio Turi at his near-post.

However, there was little Turi could do to prevent Doak getting the goal which Liverpool's start merited just before the half-hour mark. The pacy 16-year-old picked the ball up on the right flank, drove infield with purpose and dispatched an excellent finish into the bottom corner.

As expected, Napoli emerged with added endeavour after the break. Davies had to turn Antonio Pesce's shot wide after the striker had sprinted in behind the Liverpool defence and the same two players were then involved in the penalty incident with Davies bringing down Pesce after being rounded. Napoli captain Iaccarino fired home from the spot.

The momentum seemed to have swung back in the hosts' favour, but another moment of outstanding quality from Doak undid their comeback. He drilled in a low cross after racing past left-back Enrico Giannini inside the area and Cannonier's run to the near-post was rewarded as he restored Liverpool's advantage.



Napoli felt that they should have snatched a draw with 10 minutes left but Davies smothered Dylan De Pasquale's header with a fine stop and the midfielder then put the rebound wide from a couple of yards out.

***Liverpool U19s:** Davies; Mabaya, Quansah, Jonas, Chambers; Corness, McConnell, Frauendorf; Doak (Miles 90), Cannonier (Koumas 69), Kone-Doherty (Young 88). Subs not used: Onanuga, Osborne, Pennington, Hewitson.*







MATCHDAY TWO

TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2022 KIRKBY ACADEMY
LIVERPOOL 4 (CANNONIER 3, KOUMAS)
AFC AJAX 0

The Reds built on their promising start by hammering Ajax on home soil and the scoreline in no way flattered them.

As Sir Kenny Dalglish and ex-players-turned-Academy-coaches Michael Thomas and Jay Spearing looked on from the balcony, Liverpool made an early breakthrough.

Ajax's high press forced goalkeeper Harvey Davies to clear long and it was right-back Isaac Mabaya who was the furthest man forward. He kept the ball in play and, following a neat interchange between Oakley Cannonier and Bobby Clark, it was Mabaya who crossed for Cannonier to side-foot home on the volley.

A minute later Ajax were grateful to goalkeeper Tommy Setford after he turned another Cannonier effort around the post.

Frank Peereboom's young side finally began to get a foothold in the game and talented left-sided forward David Kalokoh almost equalised on the half-hour mark but Davies dived to his left and tipped the ball onto the crossbar.

Ajax started the second half in sprightly fashion, but after Stanis Idumbo-Muzambo clipped a shot straight at Davies and centre-back Luke Chambers stopped another promising attack, the Reds assumed control.

Cannonier doubled his tally in the 54th minute when Ajax keeper Setford, under pressure from the Liverpool striker, cleared the ball straight to Clark, who teed up Cannonier to slot home.

Chambers then almost scored an outrageous goal from the halfway line when Setford rushed out of his box and cleared the ball to him, but his left-footed effort clipped the outside of the post.

Ajax began to fade and Cannonier completed his hat-trick – the first scored in a UEFA Youth League game by a Liverpool player since Curtis Jones against Napoli in 2019 – in the 75th minute.

Left-back James Norris did well down the left and the ball eventually fell to Cannonier, who calmly found the net.

There was still time for substitute Lewis Koumas to add to the Reds' tally when he guided home a low cross from winger Melkamu Frauendorf.

Liverpool U19s: Davies; Mabaya, Jonas, Chambers, Norris; Clark, Corness, Frauendorf; Doak (Koumas 75), Cannonier (Young 79), Kone-Doherty (McConnell 62). Subs not used: Miles, Osbourne, Gyimah, Hewitson.



MATCHDAY THREE

TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2022. KIRKBY ACADEMY

LIVERPOOL 4 (CANNONIER, DOAK, QUANSAH, CHAMBERS)

RANGERS 1 (YOUNG)

The Reds made it three wins out of three with rampant display against Rangers on a wet afternoon at Kirkby.

Liverpool made an assured start, though it was the visitors who produced the first real chance when Ross McCausland crossed for his fellow Gers forward Robbie Ure, but his diving header went just wide of Harvey Davies' goal.

Midway through the half Reds winger Melkamu Frauendorf saw a low drive deflected wide by Rangers centre-back Lewis MacKinnon and from the resulting corner, captain Jarell Quansah's header was redirected into the net by prolific frontman Oakley Cannonier for his fifth goal of the season in the competition.

Liverpool doubled their advantage soon afterwards when good play down the left-hand side presented a shooting chance for midfielder Bobby Clark. His 20-yard curler thudded off the far post and winger Ben Doak, the former Celtic player, controlled and lashed home the rebound.

Rangers keeper Jacob Pazikas kept the score down to two at the interval with a string of saves but he was powerless to prevent the Reds adding a third in the 54th minute.

Midfielder Dominic Corness swung in a corner which was met by an emphatic header by Quansah after he drifted in front of his marker.

Rangers kept plugging away and their best chance fell to striker Zakariya Lovelace, found by McCausland's deep cross from the right, but his nicely struck volley was parried away by Davies.

Frauendorf and Doak were then denied by Pazikas as Liverpool regained their stranglehold on the contest but there was still time for a goal apiece in stoppage time.

Reds left-back Luke Chambers further extended the home team's lead when he broke forward and dispatched an angled finish.

However Rangers denied the Reds a clean sheet with the last kick of the game when substitute Connor Young pounced on a half-cleared cross to drive past Davies for a consolation goal.

***Liverpool U19s:* Davies; Mabaya (Miles 71), Quansah, Jonas, Chambers; Corness, Clark, McConnell; Doak, Cannonier, Frauendorf (Kone-Doherty 85). Subs not used: Hewitson, Koumas, Hayes-Green, Young, Gyimah.**







	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LIVERPOOL	**3**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**2**	**9**
Ajax	3	2	0	1	7	6	3
Rangers	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
Napoli	3	0	0	3	4	10	0

UEFA YOUTH LEAGUE 2022/23

This season, Pyunik and Coleraine are the first UEFA Youth League entrants from Armenia and Northern Ireland respectively, taking the number of different associations represented at least once in the nine editions to 45.

Nantes are the eleventh different French entrants respectively, equalling Spain's record. Along with Coleraine, Nantes and Pyunik, there are debuts for Apolonia, Ashdod, Borac Banja Luka, Csikszereda Miercurea Ciuc, Hibernian, Jelgava, Omonoia, Panathinaikos, Pobeda, Racing Union, Rukh Lviv, Shamrock Rovers, Slavia Sofia, Trencín and Zagłebie Lubin.

The Champions League path winners automatically go through to the last 16 with matches to be played on 28 February/1 March 2023 and the draw taking place on 13 February.

Should Liverpool finish second in their group, they will enter the final 32 at the play-off stage. Play-off ties will be played on 7/8 February 2023 with the draw being held in Nyon on Tuesday 8 November.

STEN-**GOAL 24**

Liverpool FC Women striker Katie Stengel enjoyed a dramatic start to her Barclays Women's Super League career last month. She reflects on that opening-day win over Chelsea, the challenges ahead, linking up with manager Matt Beard for the second time and her affectionate nickname!



Interview: William Hughes

American forward Katie Stengel has made a big impression at Liverpool FC Women from the minute she joined the club back in January. With nine goals in 13 games during the second half of last season as the Reds sealed the FA Women's Championship title, the former Valerenga player was quickly re-christened Katie 'Sten-goal' by supporters.

She hit the headlines on the opening day of the Barclays Women's Super League season too, scoring twice from the penalty spot as the Reds came from behind to defeat champions Chelsea 2-1 at Prenton Park.

The affable Florida-born attacker is now hoping both she and the team can build on that performance and help keep the women's game at the forefront of the public consciousness.

"We have had record crowds at each of our last three home league games and it was really good to see," says the no24. "Our fans have always been incredible but it's great to see that number growing and even more people in the stands.

"The success of the Euros was incredible for England. Everyone just bought in and got so involved and hopefully we can build off that and keep promoting the game and putting women's soccer on TV and making sure people are watching because we have this incredible product everyone needs to see."

The opening-day win over Chelsea and the Merseyside derby against Everton at Anfield seven days later were both broadcast live by Sky Sports while this month's Prenton Park clash against Arsenal (Sunday 23 October, noon) will be screened live by BBC.

"I think we just need to keep growing and building off that because every game should be on TV and every game should be a massive fixture," she continues.

"That's how it is in the men's game. You would never see a male team show up and, you know, no one's in the stands, no one's watching. So it's the same for the women's side. And I think, as much as we can, we need to keep that equal level platform so that we have the best opportunity to show ourselves and what we've worked on."

The 30-year-old previously worked with Liverpool manager Matt Beard during his time at Boston Breakers in 2017 and he quickly identified her as somebody who could make an impact in the English game. When she became available in January, he wasted no time in adding her to the squad.



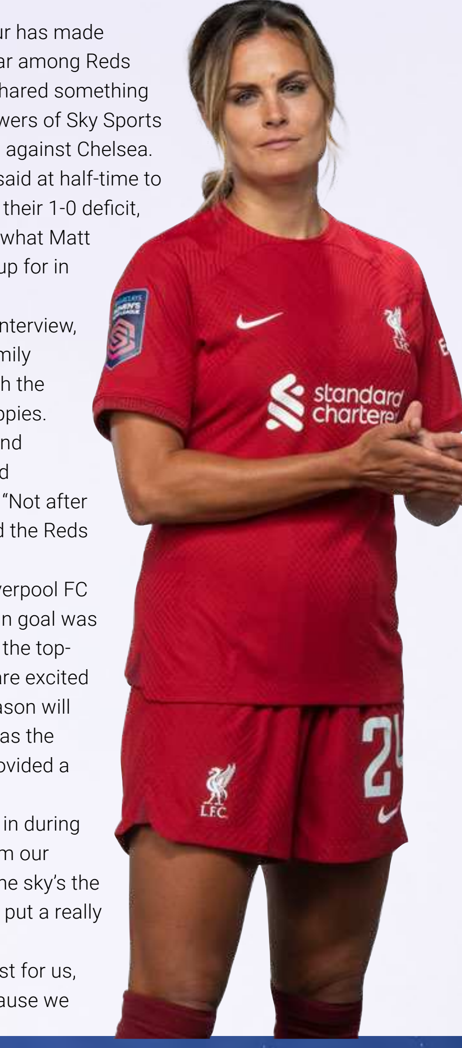
"I was lucky enough to play for him several years ago and now it's come full-circle. He's a manager who brings out the best in his players because he gives you the feeling that he really believes in each player's ability and challenges you to reach another level.

"He brings together a group and gets them to play really good football so I think I'm very lucky to get to play under him again and hopefully we can keep the success that he's had going.

"Matt's done a really good job in building an even stronger club this summer and we do have a lot of different threats. We have a very deep bench and a lot of players who will contribute this year. They have experience and a lot of different qualities that we hope to mesh together."

England is the fifth country Katie has played her football in having also had spells in Germany with Bayern Munich – winning a Bundesliga title with the Bavarians in 2014/15 – Australia, Norway and, of course, the USA.

"I think all the different leagues around the world are getting more and more similar as the game evolves," she says. "The biggest difference here is that everybody knows how to speak English, even though they speak a strange dialect! I still haven't got to grips with the language thing and I learn new words every day!"



Her dry sense of humour has made her Twitter account popular among Reds supporters and she also shared something of her personality with viewers of Sky Sports following her double-salvo against Chelsea.

Asked what Beard had said at half-time to help the team turn around their 1-0 deficit, she replied: "Let's just say what Matt lacks in height, he makes up for in motivational speeches!"

In his own post-match interview, Beard revealed that his family had recently expanded with the addition of a couple of puppies. "Will they be called Katie and Stengel after today?" asked presenter Caroline Barker. "Not after what she's just said!" joked the Reds boss.

When Stengel joined Liverpool FC Women, she knew the main goal was always promotion back to the top-flight. She says the team are excited at the possibilities this season will bring, even if games such as the Merseyside derby have provided a steep learning-curve.

"We've put a lot of work in during the off season to build from our success last year. I think the sky's the limit and we can hopefully put a really good product out there.

"Chelsea was a great test for us, but we play the game because we

"I DEFINITELY THINK WE HAVE A GAME-BY-GAME MENTALITY BUT, YOU KNOW, WE DON'T WANT TO JUST SURVIVE. WE WANT TO ACTUALLY THRIVE IN THIS LEAGUE"

want to play the best and you want to compare yourselves with them and make sure you are up for the challenge. So I think we've prepared a lot for that.

"Obviously the Everton game didn't go our way and that was disappointing, especially when so many people came out to cheer us on at Anfield. But I think we showed against Chelsea that we have a great team with great chemistry and I hope we can keep showing that we can compete against anybody."

Katie's goalscoring contribution is likely to be even more valuable with fellow forward Leanne Kiernan likely to miss most of the season after undergoing surgery on an ankle injury sustained in the win over Chelsea.

The Republic of Ireland international matched the LFCW record of 13 league goals in a season last term and was named as the Reds' player of the season. She will be a big miss as Stengel acknowledges.

"I love playing with Leanne and she obviously loves the environment here. She had looked really confident and played really well in pre-season, she had signed a new contract with the club and was looking forward to going back into the WSL so it was such a shame that she picked up that injury.

"I wish her all the success in her recovery and I'm sure she'll be back and determined to help the club a lot again as soon as she is recovered."

Liverpool FC Women supporters enjoyed Kiernan's scoring spree last season but also Katie's contribution, leading to that nickname of 'Sten-goal'. "I'm always down for a good pun!" she says. "That was creative and my dad really enjoyed that one!

"Do I have a goalscoring target? I think it's hard to put a number on things. I just want to perform consistently throughout each game and throughout the season and contribute as much as I can for the team, making sure I'm doing my role, whatever that means each week. But yes, I definitely want to get on the end of a lot of goalscoring chances and put them in the back of the net."

Liverpool supporters, who often hail her efforts by singing 'Katie Stengel 24!' to the tune of Bread of Heaven will certainly hope so too.

In terms of the team's overall aspirations, Stengel says the Reds have set no ceiling in terms of what they might achieve back in the top tier.

"Each game will bring a different challenge. I believe our opponents this season will be much more organised than past opponents, but we proved in pre-season that we can compete against WSL teams and, like I say, each week is a different challenge.

"We have to break that down and prepare well each week and make sure we know how we're going to adapt our own game.

"I definitely think we have a game-by-game mentality but, you know, we don't want to just survive. We want to actually thrive in this league. I think we can show that. We want to stay humble, confident and believe in ourselves so we can grow throughout the season.

"There are so many factors that come into play with how the table ends up but we just want to make sure we do well week-in, week-out and ultimately look back on a season that we're proud of."




YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST 1892
WALK ON







CROWD SCENES

Liverpool FC Women established a new club attendance record during last month's Merseyside derby at Anfield. A crowd of 27,574 watched the Barclays Women's Super League clash, beating the previous best figure of 23,500, set when the Merseyside rivals met in front of the Kop in 2019.

This time around Everton ran out worthy 3-0 winners thanks to first-half goals from defender Megan Finnigan and forward Jess Park before substitute Hanna Bennison wrapped things up late on.

"I thought Everton deserved to win," admitted Reds manager Matt Beard afterwards. "I'm disappointed with how we started. It was slow and we looked scared. We have to learn how to deal with these types of stadiums and crowds. Everton took full advantage of that

"I don't want that to be an excuse but it was a factor. We usually play at Prenton Park, which has been very good for us. The bigger crowd does add pressure but we have to cope with that because this is the way the women's game is going."

LFCW FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2022/23

SEPTEMBER		
Sun 18	CHELSEA	2-1
Sun 25	EVERTON	0-3
OCTOBER		
Sun 2	Sunderland (Conti Cup)	1-0
Sun 16	Tottenham Hotspur	2pm
Sun 23	ARSENAL	12pm
Wed 26	Leicester City (CC)	7pm
Sun 30	Manchester City	2pm
NOVEMBER		
Sun 6	ASTON VILLA	2pm
Sun 20	Brighton & Hove Albion	2pm
Thu 24	Reading	7pm
Sun 27	BLACKBURN ROVERS (CC)	2pm
DECEMBER		
Sun 4	WEST HAM UNITED	2pm
Wed 7	MANCHESTER CITY (CC)	7pm
Sun 11	LEICESTER CITY	2pm
JANUARY		
Sat 14	Manchester United	12pm
Sun 22	Chelsea	2pm
FEBRUARY		
Sun 5	READING	2pm
MARCH		
Sun 5	Arsenal	2pm
Sun 12	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	2pm
Sun 26	Everton	1pm
APRIL		
Sun 2	West Ham United	3pm
Sun 23	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION	2pm
Sun 30	Leicester City	3pm
MAY		
Sun 7	MANCHESTER CITY	2pm
Sun 21	Aston Villa	2pm
Sun 28	MANCHESTER UNITED	2pm

Home games in capitals; fixtures subject to change



SEPTEMBER SONG

Words: Chris McLoughlin

Pop quiz, hotshot. Can you name the 1994 film this phrase was from? Without Googling it. And excluding loan deals, can you name the two players Jürgen Klopp has signed for Liverpool on a summer transfer-window deadline day?

I'll give you a clue: one has yet to make his first-team debut and the other arrived in the same window as Mo Salah and Andy Robertson.

While you're pondering such a head-scratcher, I'll get to my point. Transfer deadline day for Liverpool supporters is a lot like watching the Monaco Grand Prix – massively hyped and has the potential to be exciting, but ultimately not much happens and it leaves you hoping the next one will be better.

Yet that's not necessarily a bad thing (for Liverpool, not F1 fans in Monaco) as getting players in early in July for a full pre-season to acclimatise to their new surroundings is invariably better than having Peter Odemwingie sat in his car outside your stadium at five to 11 on the first day of September.

What the final day of the transfer window does allow is for clubs to strengthen their squads in areas where the need is apparent and that's precisely what Jürgen did before someone in a yellow tie on the telly slammed the window shut.

Liverpool's midfield injury crisis was eased with the arrival of Arthur Melo on loan from Juventus. "What does he bring?" said the Liverpool boss. "He's a really good footballer – I think we all agree on that. He had a very exciting career already and is still pretty young, so in the best age for a footballer or coming into the best age for a footballer.

"He gives rhythm, he can give rhythm, he's a really good passer, has speed with the ball, safe on the ball and, how I said, can demand rhythm, which is pretty important, really good in tight areas – all these kinds of things. I like it a lot.

"And now, of course, it's like this: 'Why can you loan a player like this? Because it didn't work out 100 per cent at Juventus?' But I see that rather as a positive because the potential is, for sure, still there. We play obviously different to Juve and we all thought that he could fit pretty well, so that's why I'm really pleased."

Getting Arthur match-fit, after a spell on the sidelines in Italy, is the first aim, but what the boss didn't mention is that in the six games Brazil have played with Arthur and Fabinho in midfield they have a 100 per cent win record and have won eleven of 13 with Alisson and Arthur in the team. Yes, they're Brazil so of course they've won games, but those kinds of numbers bode well.

So Arthur became Liverpool's first summer transfer deadline-day signing since…his fellow Brazilian Marcelo Pitaluga in October 2020, which wasn't summer but COVID changed all the seasons. And did you work the other out?

Spotter's badge if you said Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain in the summer of 2017. The Ox was Klopp's first summer transfer deadline-day signing and LFC's first since Mamadou Sakho in 2013.

The Reds also sent four kids out on loan with Paul Glatzel (Tranmere Rovers), Max Woltman (Doncaster Rovers), Jack Bearne (Caernarfon Town) and Fidel O'Rourke (Kidderminster Harriers) off to gain experience against seasoned pros in various other leagues.

As for Arthur then he was eligible to play in the weekend's Merseyside derby at Goodison Park, but Klopp wisely decided not to throw him into the cauldron as he wasn't yet up to *Speed* – which happens to be the name of the 1994 film in which Dennis Hopper used the phrase "Pop quiz, hotshot" when on the blower to Keanu Reeves about a bus driving at 50mph.

Merseyside derbies are usually played at twice that speed and the 2022 renewal across the park had no shortage of chances, just a shortage of goals. It was Liverpool's fourth goalless draw at G0-0dison in six seasons, although nobody quite knew how.

Thirty-seven shots on goal, 16 corners, one disallowed goal and the woodwork struck more often than at a woodpeckers convention in Woodsboro woods. Of course, the 241st Merseyside derby had plenty of post-match whataboutery, but there was a reminder of how our city stands together in moments of tragedy when the whole ground stood for a minute of applause in memory of Olivia Pratt-Korbel. Some inexplicable events transcend rivalry.

Tom Davies hit the post first for the Blues before Darwin Nunez unleashed a half-volley that Jordan Pickford just managed to tip onto the crossbar. From the rebound, Luis Diaz rattled the upright so hard it did well to stay upright.

The second half was like a basketball game. Nathan Patterson's shot was blocked by Virgil van Dijk for an Everton corner, from which a Reds counter-attack ended with Pickford scooping a Roberto Firmino shot wide.

Bobby then met Andy Robertson's corner with his head, but Pickford beat the ball away, and from the set-piece that followed Nunez headed down for Fabinho to shoot only for the Everton goalkeeper to push the ball away again.

The Blues then launched a counter-attack that ended with Alisson making a brilliant save from Neil Maupay, who was also faced with Mo Salah throwing himself in front of the ball after racing back to put in a challenge.

When ex-Red Conor Coady then touched Maupay's shot in at the far-post the Gwladys Street partied like it was 1995, but VAR spotted that he was offside and the goal was chalked off, sparking celebrations among the travelling Kop.

As the final whistle grew closer Alisson brilliantly tipped Dwight McNeil's curler over and Firmino had another effort saved by Pickford before a dramatic finale saw Salah's 95th minute shot finger-tipped onto the foot of the post by the Everton goalie. How it ended up 0-0 is a mystery, but it was more points dropped by the Reds.

Also dropping, onto the club website a few days later, was Liverpool's new third kit, which is officially 'dark atomic teal' and 'Rio teal' with a 'siren red trim'. As part of the launch the club also commissioned a custom-made banner by supporter and flag-maker Mark Sweatman, which features 97 stars – each one representing an away victory or trophy win for the Reds in Europe and their locations.



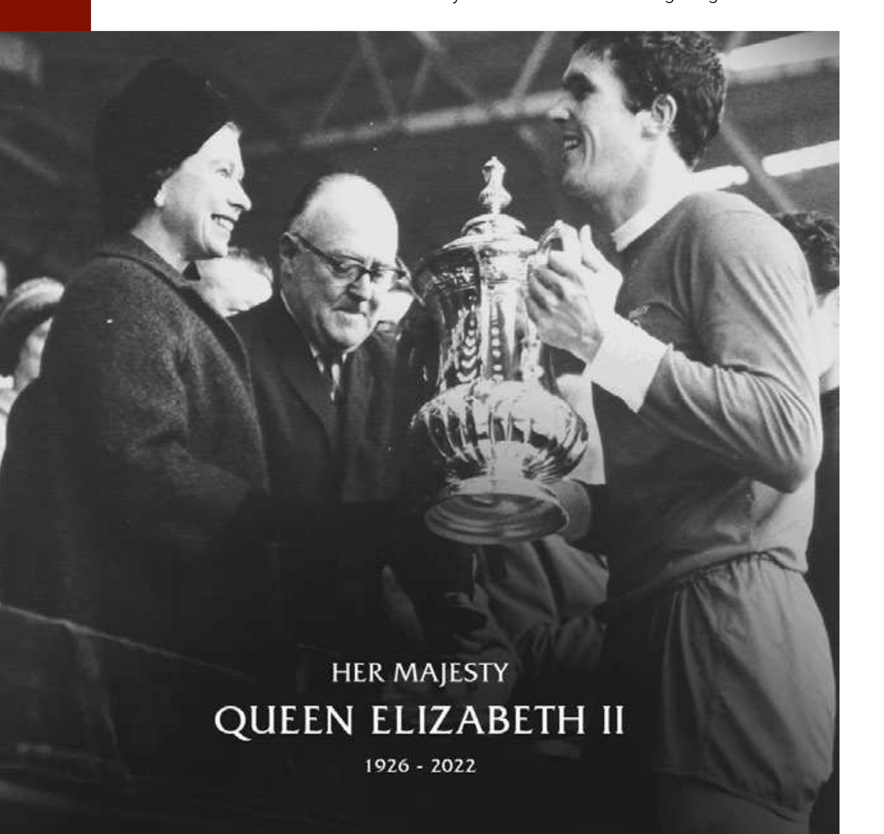


It's fair to say Mark's banner didn't need an update after Napoli away which, in all honesty, was an absolute shocker.

Of all the stadiums Liverpool have played at during the last 130 years, has there ever been a bigger bogey ground than Stadio Diego Armando Maradona, aka the San Paolo? Our previous three visits had ended 0-0, 0-1 and 0-2, so while it was nice to finally see a Liverpool goal there, it would have been even nicer if the Reds hadn't already conceded four.

"With Alisson Becker in goal you have to be very bad to concede three [first half] goals," was Klopp's take on it. "It was a real horror show. It was the worst game we played since I have been here. Some will point at games against Aston Villa [the 7-2 defeat in 2020] for example. But in those games there were glimpses of us, but in this one there was nothing. We have to understand why."

I won't recall it goal-by-goal, but if you've got kids and want to save money this Halloween while giving them a fright then just make them sit through the first half again while they're pumpkin-carving.



The big positive was the performance of Diaz, who was by far Liverpool's best player on the night and frightfully unlucky not to score a second goal with a header as powerful as some of his shots. He's some player and a couple of days later his brilliant goal against Crystal Palace was shortlisted for the Premier League goal of the month award for August. It also won LFC goal of the month.

Liverpool won't have a Premier League goal-of-the-month contender for September, however, as the record books will show that the Reds didn't score any in their sole fixture, the 0-0 draw at Everton.

On 8 September, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II passed away at the age of 96. As a mark of respect, and also due to policing issues regarding managing the crowds of mourners converging on London, Liverpool's subsequent Premier League fixtures at home to Wolves and away at Chelsea were postponed.

Liverpool FC Women's season-opener at Reading was also off, as were Academy games, and while there are vastly different views on the subject of the monarchy, Queen Elizabeth II has a place in our club's history.

She was the first person to hand the FA Cup to a Reds' skipper – Big Ron Yeats at Wembley in 1965 – and while the black-and-white photo doesn't show it, she did so dressed in red.

Current LFC captains Jordan Henderson and Niamh Fahey both visited Liverpool Town Hall to sign the book of condolence for British history's longest-serving monarch, who was on the throne for 45 of the record 50 major honours won by the kings of football, Liverpool FC.

While Premier League footy was off, the Champions League continued and it meant that we finally got to see a modern era Liverpool v Ajax game in front of a crowd after the two 2020 encounters were played behind-closed-doors.

"When the draw for the Champions League was made you could hear the joy and screaming all over the city," wrote Amsterdam-based Mike Verweij, Ajax watcher for *De Telegraaf* newspaper, in the matchday programme.



"Anfield has a good reputation with Ajax fans."

Ajax brought one of the best, noisiest away followings for an Anfield Champions League game in ages, but it was the Liver Bird rather than *Three Little Birds* singing sweet songs that every little thing, gonna be alright after this one.

Andy Robertson was the latest to join the injury list, but with Thiago, Joel Matip and Diogo Jota finally fit to start again the Reds had a renewed zest, intensity and purpose about them. Napoli felt like ten years ago, nevermind a week, and while those who bizarrely see winning by a late goal as somehow inferior to winning by an early one pointed out that Liverpool 'needed an 89th-minute winner' and 'only won by a late goal', the Redmen deservedly won.

The opening 15 minutes resembled two big cats sizing each other up and then Salah pounced. Alisson clipped a long ball forward that attracted Ajax centre-back Jurrien Timber towards Diaz to challenge for the ball. Diaz won the header, a space opened up for Jota and he drew two Ajax defenders towards him before slipping a perfect pass through for Salah to sweep into the bottom corner.

Six more goals and Mo equals Steven Gerrard's all-time club record of 41 in European competition, and he's got 69 games in hand.

Diaz and Jota then struck a couple of efforts narrowly



wide before Ajax finally ventured down the other end and scored with their only shot on target of the night, Mohammed Kudus smashing an unsavable shot past Alisson off the underside of the crossbar.

Liverpool looked dangerous from set-pieces all night – Virgil van Dijk and Joel Matip would've got to a seagull first if one had flown above the Ajax box – but that second goal just wouldn't come and then Daley Blind had a chance to win it served to him on a plate with a napkin, luxury cutlery and a glass of chateau blanc 1947, but headed wide from close-range.

The Dutch champions were made to pay when Matip powered an 89th-minute Kostas Tsimikas corner goalwards and although Dusan Tadic, a former Saint of St Mary's, volleyed clear, the ball was so far over the line that it could have prompted a steward to intervene to stop it getting back onto the pitch.

Liverpool 2 Ajax 1. Hang that in the Rijksmuseum. And kudos to Trent Alexander-Arnold too for becoming LFC's youngest-ever player, at 23, to make 50 appearances in Europe for the club. For context, Phil Thompson also made 50, Sir Kenny Dalglish 51.

"It was more like the Liverpool we have known over the past years," said 2001 treble-winner Stephane Henchoz on BBC Radio 5 Live. "Jürgen was pleased with the intensity and aggression and that was exactly how I felt.

"There were a few players back and it made a huge difference. Thiago is so important. Without him, it's difficult for Liverpool to produce the sort of football they like."

Thiago, ridiculously, wasn't one of the players heading off on international duty (how good must Spain be?) and nor was Arthur. He wasn't taking time off either, instead opting to work on his fitness and make himself available to play for Liverpool U21s in a Premier League 2 game against Leicester City and in the Papa John's Trophy at Rochdale.

"Arthur has been in over the international break to play games and build up his fitness," U21s coach Barry Lewtas told the *Liverpool Echo*. "That's off his own back, so that shows his level of professionalism.

"He has been first-class. In training he was excellent, he really drove the lads and as a matchday minus one, it's probably the best one we've had.

"He wants to get fit, he doesn't need a week off, so it's come from him. He doesn't speak Scouse and I don't speak Portuguese, but I think you can tell from the body language. He has embraced it."

Can't say I saw the 1-0 defeat at Spotland, but when I read that Arthur had been replaced by Academy player-coach Jay Spearing I questioned which year I'd woken up in.



And for the record, Layton Stewart – fit and firing again after injury last season – got the only goal against Leicester.

Liverpool Women also got their campaign going with a superb 2-1 comeback win against champions Chelsea at Prenton Park, with Katie Stengel converting two penalties, but found it much tougher at Anfield against Everton, who won 3-0.





Manager Matt Beard reckoned his team didn't handle playing in front of the record home crowd of 27,574 particularly well, but then they are also a newly-promoted side and that usually means some tough afternoons will follow.

At least Liverpool FC Legends won on their Anfield return, seeing off Man United 2-1 with a Florent Sinama-Pongolle winner in the Legends of the North second leg, and if you walked through Stanley Park to either game you'll have noticed the new artwork created by MurWalls on the fence behind the Annie Road end building site.

Sixteen different artists collaborated to put 14 different LFC forwards, past and present, onto the hoardings and they'll all be auctioned off for the LFC Foundation when the new stand is completed. "We wanted to create some artwork for the community while the building work is in

progress," said Marc Silver, founder and CEO of licenced street artist company MurWalls, whose artist Hugh Whitaker also created the new Boss Night-commissioned Klopp mural on Randolph Street.

"Together with LFC, we came up with the concept to celebrate the club's attacking legends. Going back 25 years to the present and working with our MurWalls artist team, each one is a different style for each individual portrait."

Boss that, and so was the heartwarming news from Sheffield that Germany's U21s squad paid their respects to the 97 by visiting the memorial at Hillsborough and laying a floral wreath before playing an England U21s side, with Harvey Elliott in it, at Bramall Lane.

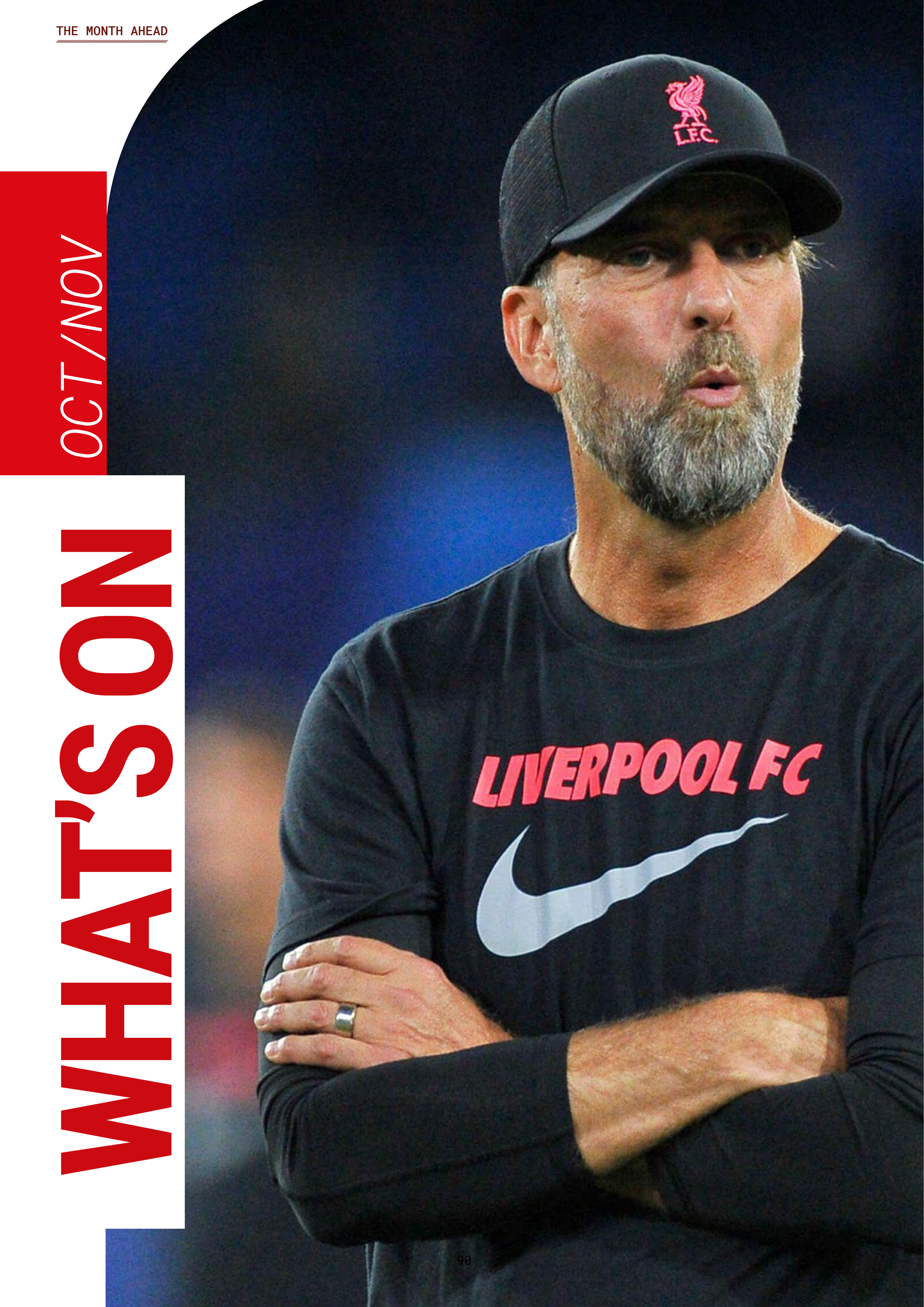
As the month came to a close the lads who returned from international duty – Nunez got a goal for Uruguay against Canada by the way – were joined by Caoimhin Kelleher, Calvin Ramsay and Ibrahima Konate back on the training pitch for the first time since the season started.

If it was a case of *Wake Me Up When September Ends* for those lads then let's hope they help Liverpool to hit top form because with nine games to play and some key fixtures along the way, it really needs to be a Red October…



WHAT'S ON

OCT/NOV



I FEEL NINE!

The period between 9 October and 6 November sees the Reds braced for another hectic run of fixtures. A sequence of nine games in 28 days takes in six Premier League matches plus the final three group games in the UEFA Champions League.

The league action is bookended by two dates in North London with the Reds aiming to produce their Sunday best at Arsenal's Emirates on 9 October and the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on 6 November.

In-between those games they also have Anfield fixtures against Manchester City, West Ham United and Leeds United to look forward to, as well as a first league game at Nottingham Forest since April 1999. The sides will meet at the City Ground on Saturday 22 October – seven years to the day since Jürgen Klopp's first home match as Liverpool FC manager.

The Reds will also be aiming to make sure of qualification from the group stages of the Champions League. They play their first-ever competitive game at Ibrox on Wednesday 12 October before making the trip to Amsterdam to play Ajax on Wednesday 26 October.

If it all comes down to matchday six, there could be shades of 2018/19 in the air when Napoli are in L4 on Tuesday 1 November.



OCT/NOV

WHAT'S ON

ARSENAL AND VILLA AT PRENTON PARK

North London rivals Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal also figure prominently on Liverpool FC Women's fixture list in Barclays Women's Super League action through October.

It all starts with a trip to Leyton Orient's Brisbane Road to take on Tottenham on Sunday 16 October (2pm). A week later, Arsenal Women are at Tranmere's Prenton Park for a noon kick-off which will be broadcast live by the BBC (2pm).

Sunday 30 October sees Matt Beard's side end the month with a short trip to Manchester City (2pm) before the Reds kick-off their November programme with a home game against Aston Villa on Sunday 6 November (2pm).

Meanwhile, there is a Merseyside derby to look forward to for the Reds' Under-21s when Everton are the visitors to Kirkby for a Premier League 2 meeting on Saturday 22 October (2pm).





ANNIVERSARIES

7 years since Jürgen Klopp's first home match as Reds manager on 22 October 2015.

12 years since FSG took ownership of the club on 15 October 2010.

13 years since a 2-0 win over Man United at Anfield (with Nemanja Vidic red-carded for a third consecutive time) on 25 October 2009.

38 years since Ian Rush scored five against Luton Town on 29 October 1983.

57 years since Liverpool defeated Juventus 2-0 in a European Cup Winners' Cup tie at Anfield on 13 October 1965.

130 years since Matt McQueen and his brother Hugh made their debuts in LFC's first FA Cup tie at Anfield on 29 October 1892.

And it's 35 years since Ray Houghton joined the Reds on 19 October 1987...

In September 1987, Liverpool beat Oxford United 2-0 in their first home game of the season. John Barnes scored his first goal in a red shirt after earlier supplying an assist for John Aldridge to open the scoring against his former club.

However, in his diary for the season, player-manager Kenny Dalglish revealed that he had been impressed with the performance of another Oxford United man, midfielder Ray Houghton. Six weeks later Dalglish brought him to Liverpool, paying £825,000 for the Irish international. Dalglish's diary also revealed how news of the transfer came out earlier than planned. "Under the terms of the transfer agreement with Oxford, everything was to be kept secret. But our big secret leaked out! Some supporters who were queuing at Anfield for match tickets saw and recognised Ray and immediately telephoned local radio stations and newspapers.

"We arrived at our hotel in Scotland [for a testimonial match for Dundee's George McGeachie] to find numerous telephone messages that have been left for me by journalists and radio people. But I still could not talk to them about Ray Houghton – my obligation was to wait until news of the transfer had been published in the first editions of The Daily Mirror later tonight.

"However, no matter how careful you are, it is always possible to make a slip in situations like this and, unwittingly, I did. A local Dundee photographer arrived at the hotel and asked to take a group picture of the players before their evening meal. I gave permission to do so, forgetting that Ray would be in the photograph. So it was a totally innocent mistake on my part but there's nothing I can do about it. However, the picture was to be published the next day after the Mirror's first editions had hit the streets. So fortunately the embargo held despite my faux pas!"

BIRTHDAYS

Niamh Fahey 35 on 13 October
Leighton Clarkson 21 on 19 October
Chris Lawler 79 on 20 October
Ian Rush 61 on 20 October
Stefan Bajcetic 18 on 22 October
David Johnson 71 on 23 October
Fabinho 29 on 23 October
Willie Stevenson 83 on 26 October
Milan Baros 41 on 28 October
Tyler Morton 20 on 31 October
Jimmy Melia 85 on 1 November
Rachael Laws 32 on 5 November



STOP THE HATE REPORT IT

LIVERPOOLFC.COM/REPORTABUSE



Red Together



L.F.C.

FIXTURES 2022/23

			KO	TV	SCORE	SCORERS
JULY						
30	Manchester City (Community Shield)	N	5pm	itv	3-1	Alexander-Arnold, Salah (pen), Nunez
AUGUST						
6	Fulham	A	12.30pm	BT	2-2	Nunez, Salah
15	**Crystal Palace**	**H**	**8pm**	**Sky**	**1-1**	**Diaz**
22	Manchester United	A	8pm	Sky	1-2	Salah
27	**Bournemouth**	**H**	**3pm**		**9-0**	**Diaz 2, Elliott, Alexander-Arnold, Firmino 2, van Dijk, Mepham og, Carvalho**
31	**Newcastle United**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-1**	**Firmino, Carvalho**
SEPTEMBER						
3	Everton	A	12.30pm	BT	0-0	
7	Napoli (UCL M1)	A	8pm	BT	1-4	Diaz
13	**Ajax (UCL M2)**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-1**	**Salah, Matip**
OCTOBER						
1	**Brighton**	**H**	**3pm**		**3-3**	**Firmino 2, Webster og**
4	**Rangers (UCL M3)**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-0**	**Alexander-Arnold, Salah (pen)**
9	Arsenal	A	4.30pm	Sky		
12	Rangers (UCL M4)	A	8pm	BT		
16	**Manchester City**	**H**	**4.30pm**	**Sky**		
19	**West Ham**	**H**	**7.30pm**	**AP**		
22	Nottm Forest	A	12.30pm	BT		
26	Ajax (UCL M5)	A	8pm	BT		
29	**Leeds United**	**H**	**7.45pm**	**Sky**		
NOVEMBER						
1	**Napoli (UCL M6)**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**		
6	Tottenham	A	4.30pm	Sky		
9	**Derby County (Carabao Cup 3)**	**H**	**8pm**			
12	**Southampton**	**H**	**3pm**			
DECEMBER						
20/21	Carabao Cup 4					
26	Aston Villa	A	3pm			
31	**Leicester City**	**H**	**3pm**			
JANUARY						
2	Brentford	A	3pm			
7	Emirates FA Cup 3					
10/11	Carabao Cup Q-F					
14	Brighton	A	3pm			
21	**Chelsea**	**H**	**3pm**			
25	Carabao Cup S-F 1					
28	Emirates FA Cup 4					
FEBRUARY						
1	Carabao Cup S-F 2					
4	Wolves	A	3pm			
11	**Everton**	**H**	**3pm**			
14/15	UEFA Champions League R16 1					
18	Newcastle	A	3pm			
21/22	UEFA Champions League R16 1					
25	Crystal Palace	A	3pm			
26	Carabao Cup final	N				
MARCH						
1	Emirates FA Cup 5					
4	**Manchester United**	**H**	**3pm**			
7/8	UEFA Champions League R16 2					
11	Bournemouth	A	3pm			
14/15	UEFA Champions League R16 2					
18	**Fulham**	**H**	**3pm**			
18	Emirates FA Cup Q-F					
APRIL						
1	Manchester City	A	3pm			
8	**Arsenal**	**H**	**3pm**			
11/12	UEFA Champions League Q-F 1					
16	Leeds United	A	3pm			
18/19	UEFA Champions League Q-F 2					
22	**Nottm Forest**	**H**	**3pm**			
22/23	Emirates FA Cup S-F	N				
25	West Ham	A	7.45pm			
29	**Tottenham**	**H**	**3pm**			
MAY						
6	**Brentford**	**H**	**3pm**			
9/10	UEFA Champions League S-F 1					
13	Leicester City	A	3pm			
16/17	UEFA Champions League S-F 2					
20	**Aston Villa**	**H**	**3pm**			
28	Southampton	A	4pm			
JUNE						
3	Emirates FA Cup final	N				
10	UEFA Champions League final	N				
TBC	**Wolves**	**H**				
TBC	Chelsea	A		Sky		

All fixtures are subject to change



WHAT'S IN



ADULTS RETRO CANDY HOME SHIRT
£55



ZIP THROUGH HOODY NAVY
£35



MENS HOODED DRESSING GOWN
£35



JUNIOR JOG SET CHARCOAL
£40

STORE

JUST A FEW FABULOUS GIFT IDEAS AVAILABLE FROM OFFICIAL LIVERPOOL FC STORES AND ONLINE



BABY SHANKLY TRACKSUIT
£25

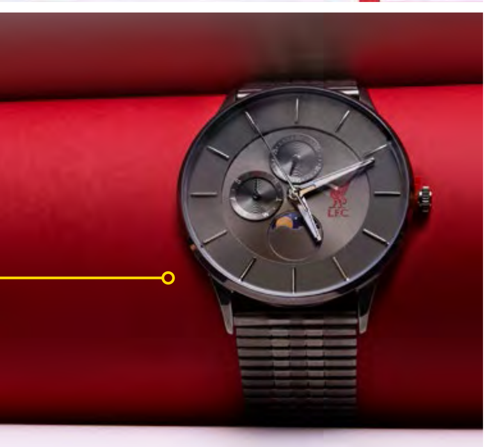




3 X WIN FRAMED IMAGES
£80



HOME & AWAY MUG SET
£25



TITANIUM STRAP WATCH
£150



22/23 HOME BEAR
£22



MATTE GOLD CREST MUG
£10

Shop for all your Liverpool FC essentials in Official Club Stores and at liverpoolfc.com/store and for more details follow @LFCRetail on Twitter, Instagram and TikTok! Terms and conditions apply.



NEIL MELLOR

Luis Diaz is a special player who I believe is going to kick on to become world-class, making it an exciting prospect to watch him flourish at Liverpool like Mane and Salah did

When Luis Diaz arrived at Liverpool from Porto last season I don't think anybody expected him to be as good as he was so quickly. It is a huge credit to Diaz that he established himself into the first-team so smoothly because it can be hard for players who don't know the league, don't speak the language and don't know the size of the football club to adapt, especially when you're a January signing.

His workrate has been infectious – something we were used to from Sadio Mane and going back further to Luis Suarez – and his attitude has been incredible too. Diaz has also produced some stunning goals, like his strike against Crystal Palace at Anfield, and showed bravery to score at Brighton last season before being clattered by the goalkeeper.

The stats will suggest there's not a great deal of difference between Liverpool with Mane and Liverpool with Diaz, but I'm not a fan of such comparisons. Diaz is his own player and Mane became a world-class player at Liverpool.

There is no doubt we lost a world-class player when Mane signed for Bayern Munich, but I believe that Diaz can become world-class too. We've seen many good moments from him, now it's about consistency.

You have to remember that Diaz played a lot of football last season. Liverpool played 63 games with Jordan Henderson (57) and Diogo Jota (54) making the most appearances whereas Diaz played 64 games for club and country.

That is a lot of football, yet he never looked jaded – which is quite phenomenal. Given Colombia didn't qualify for the World Cup it will be a huge boost to Jürgen Klopp to have a refreshed Diaz after Christmas.

Going into the Arsenal game at The Emirates, Diaz had scored 10 goals for Liverpool with the statistics showing they were assisted by 10 different players, including both left-backs Andy Robertson and Kostas Tsimikas.

Robertson and Mane had a brilliant relationship down the left and I'm sure that will come with Robertson and Diaz. I'd also say some of the goals Diaz has scored makes it tricky to attribute an assist as they were individual goals or screamers made from absolutely nothing after receiving a pass.

That said, it's good to have a variety of players linking with Diaz as opponents can't just try to stop Robertson, for example, from getting the ball to him.

Of course, we got used to Mo Salah and Mane linking together from both sides of the pitch and while Salah and Diaz have only combined directly for one goal so far, against Manchester United last season, I'm hopeful this partnership will develop in time.

Every forward player has to contribute goals, especially with Mane gone, and that's why I particularly enjoyed Diaz's double in the 9-0 win against Bournemouth: two 'ugly', close-range headers from a cross and a corner.

What we're all waiting to see now is whether he can gel with Darwin Nunez.

Klopp has essentially got a front-five and we don't yet know which combination will be the most productive. Whereas everyone knew in the past that Bobby Firmino, Salah and Mane were the established front-three, now I'm not sure there will be a settled trio upfront.

So Diaz and Salah are going to need to forge as good an understanding with Nunez and Jota as they do with Firmino, who has already scored more Premier League goals at Anfield this season than during the last three combined.

There are a lot of games to play, including all the Champions League group games before the next edition of this magazine is out, and we've not even started in the domestic cups yet so I envisage a variety of forward lines playing. I can also see Nunez starting far more regularly. For me, Nunez is the real deal and is going to score a lot of goals for Liverpool when the team adjusts to what type of centre forward he is.

Ultimately, goals win football matches and while Liverpool's defence has taken some stick, the Premier League table showed after the Brighton game that the Reds had conceded the same number of goals as Manchester City. The difference was that City had scored eleven more goals and that got them results.

Liverpool have created lots of chances in every game but haven't been clinical enough. Scoring the first goal has been a problem this season and that is a big area where if Liverpool improve then so too will results.

We can't just rely on Salah to score 30 goals-a-season, either. Everyone needs to contribute and 20 is a tally that people always identify as a good return for any attacking player. Mane scored at least 20 goals in four of the last five seasons and that's the kind of return we're looking for from Luis Diaz now.

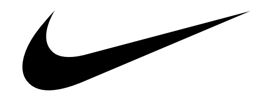
He is a special player who I believe is going to kick on to become world-class, making it an exciting prospect to watch him flourish at Liverpool in the same way that Mane and Salah did.



• Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33










WE ARE PLEASED TO RECOGNISE THE OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF LIVERPOOL FC











































WALK ON